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THE EMERALD STORY BOOK

THE EMERALD STORY BOOK

Stories and Legends of Spring, Nature, and Easter

COMPILED BY
ADA M. SKINNER
AND
ELEANOR L. SKINNER

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INTRODUCTION

THERE is no richer theme for children's stories than the miracle of Spring. The selections in "The Emerald Story Book" aim to serve the young reader's interest in three ways. Some of the myths and legends are interesting or amusing because flowers, insects, or birds are presented as personalities and emphasise human qualities or feelings. Some of the stories and poems contribute to the child's store of knowledge by attracting his attention to some fact, beauty, or blessing in nature which may have escaped his notice. Still others make an appeal by suggesting or affirming the abiding hope symbolised in the thought, "See the land her Easter keeping."

The child's heart is filled with the joy of spring,—with the rapture expressed in the thrush's song which Mrs. Ewing describes. "Fresh water and green woods, ambrosial sunshine and sun-flecked shade, chattering brooks

and rustling leaves, glade and sward and dell. Lichens and cool mosses, feathered ferns and flowers. Green leaves! Green leaves! Joy! Joy!"

The editors' thanks are due to Mrs. Katherine Tynan-Hinckson for permission to use her poem, "Sheep and Lambs"; Miss Lucy Wheelock for her story, "A Little Acorn"; to Mr. Bliss Carman for "A Lyric of Joy"; Mr. Clinton Scollard for "The Little Brown Wren"; Mr. James Whitcomb Riley for the quotation from "Mister Hop-Toad"; Mrs. Agnes McClelland Daulton and Rand, McNally & Co., for two stories, "A Great Family" and "Jolly Little Tars"; Mr. Warren J. Brier for "Mr. Pine and Mr. Maple"; Mrs. Margaret Deland for her poem, "Jonquils"; Miss Helen Keller for "Edith and the Bees"; Mrs. Annie Trumbull Slosson for "A Child's Easter"; and Mr. Alfred Noyes for his poem "Little Boy Blue"; and to the following publishers who have granted permission to reprint selections in this collection from works bearing their copyright: to G. P. Put-

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CONTENTS

SPRING STORIES AND LEGENDS

PAGE

APRIL 2
Robert Browning

THE SPRING-MAIDEN AND THE FROST GIANTS (Norse Legend) 3
Eleanor L. Skinner

HOW THE BLUEBIRD WAS CHOSEN HERALD 14
Jay T. Stocking

THE SPRINGTIME 32
Eugene Field

THE SELFISH GIANT 41
Oscar Wilde

THE PROMISED PLANT 50
Andrea Hofer Proudfoot

BRIER ROSE 54
Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith

PICCIOLA (Adapted) 61
St. Saintine

ST. FRANCIS, THE LITTLE BEDESMAN OF CHRIST 67
William Canton

PROSERPINA AND KING PLUTO (Greek Myth) 71
Eleanor L. Skinner

THE WONDER—A PARABLE (From "Parables") 82
Friedrich Adolph Krummacher

NATURE STORIES AND LEGENDS

GREEN THINGS GROWING (Poem) 86
Dinah Mulock Craik

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE STORY OF A LITTLE GRAIN OF WHEAT 87
May Byron

THE LITTLE ACORN 100
Lucy Wheelock

THE STORY OF TWO LITTLE SEEDS 104
George MacDonald

HOW THE FLOWERS CAME (Selected) 107
Jay T. Stocking

THE LEGEND OF TRAILING ARBUTUS (Indian Legend) . . 115
Eleanor L. Skinner

THE FAIRY FLOWER (Adapted from "Norwood") 120
Henry Ward Beecher

THE SNOWDROP 127
Hans Christian Andersen

WHAT THE DANDELION TOLD 131
Clara Maetzel

VERSE 137
James Russell Lowell

A GREAT FAMILY 138
Agnes McClelland Daulton

THE BIRTH OF THE VIOLET (Legend) 142
Ada M. Skinner

A LYRIC OF JOY (Poem) 148
Bliss Carman

AMONG THE TREE-TOPS

ROBIN'S CAROL (From "Angler's Reveille") 150
Henry van Dyke

HOW THE BIRDS CAME (Indian Legend) 151
Ada M. Skinner

HOW THE BIRDS LEARNED TO BUILD NESTS 154
James Baldwin

OUT OF THE NEST 158
Maud Lindsay

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE STORY OF BLUE-WINGS 164
Mary Stewart

AN EASTERN LEGEND (Poem) 170
Grace Duffield Goodwin

THE HOUSE WREN 171
Neltje Blanchan

THE LITTLE BROWN WREN 173
Clinton Scollard

THE CHILDREN OF WIND AND THE CLAN OF PEACE (A Christ-Legend) (Adapted) 176
Fiona MacLeod

IN MEADOW AND POND

A SPRING LILT (Poem) 182
Unknown

HOW BUTTERFLIES CAME 183
Hans Christian Andersen

WHITE BUTTERFLIES (Poem) 184
Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE BUTTERFLY 185
Mrs. Alfred Gatty

THE WIND, A HELPER 196
Mary Stewart

THE SPRINGING TREE: WILLOWS 203
Mrs. Dyson

PUSSY WILLOW 210
Kate Louise Brown

THE DRAGON FLY 212
Mrs. Alfred Gatty

THE CICADA'S STORY (Selected) 220
Agnes McClelland Daulton

EDITH AND THE BEES 226
Helen Keller

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE LITTLE TADPOLES (From Stories in "Prose and Verse") 230
Katharine Pyle

MISTER HOP-TOAD (Poem) 237
James Whitcomb Riley

BUZ AND HUM 238
Maurice Noël

THE STORY WITHOUT AN END. 1. In the Green Meadow. 2. The Story of a Drop of Water 246
Translated by *Sarah Austin* from the German of *A. Carove*

LEGEND OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT 253
Ada M. Skinner

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER (Poem) 256
Ella Higginson

JOLLY LITTLE TARS 257
Agnes McClelland Daulton

MR. MAPLE AND MR. PINE 275
Warren Judson Brier

A GARDEN OF EASTER STORIES

OLD ENGLISH VERSE 286

THE EASTER RABBIT (German Legend) 287
Eleanor L. Skinner

THE BOY WHO DISCOVERED THE SPRING 295
Raymond MacDonald Alden

SHEEP AND LAMBS (Poem) 308
Katharine Tynan

ROBIN REDBREAST—A CHRIST-LEGEND (Adapted) (From Christ-Legends) 309
Selma Lagerlöf

THE MAPLE SEED 318
From *The Atlantic Monthly*

WHY THE IVY IS ALWAYS GREEN 322
Madge Bingham

CONTENTS

PAGE

JONQUILS (Poem) 329
Margaret Deland

WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM 330
Mary Stewart

THE LEGEND OF THE EASTER LILY 345
Ada M. Skinner

SONG 346
Henry Neville Maughan

IN THE GARDEN: AN EASTER PRELUDE 347
W. M. L. Jay

"SPIRIT" AND "LIFE" 352
Margaret Emma Ditto

A CHILD'S EASTER (Poem) 359
Annie Trumbull Slosson

THE SPIRIT OF EASTER 363
Helen Keller

THERE ARE NO DEAD 365
Maurice Maeterlinck, adapted from "The Bluebird" by Madame Maeterlinck.

LITTLE BOY BLUE (Poem) 370
Alfred Noyes

THE EMERALD STORY BOOK

SPRING STORIES AND LEGENDS

APRIL

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

And after April, when May follows
And the whitethroat builds and all the swallows!
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower—
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Robert Browning.

THE SPRING-MAIDEN AND THE FROST GIANTS

In their glittering palace of icebergs the Frost Giants were planning to capture Iduna, the fair Spring-Maiden, and the rare treasure which she guarded. Hoar-Frost, North-Wind, Sleet, Hail, and Blizzard were growing restless, locked in their frozen waste-land of the North. They longed to enter the valley of Spring and bring desolation to the fruitful fields.

"We are helpless unless we seize the Spring-Maiden and take from her the casket of golden apples," said Giant Hoar-Frost. "So long as she guards this life-giving fruit all nature will rejoice; the birds will sing their foolish jubilees; gay blossoms will flaunt in the meadows; robes of green will bedeck the trees, and the people will enjoy everlasting youth and vigour."

"What you say is true," said Giant North-Wind. "If once I could enter the groves of

the Spring-Maiden's valley I'd howl so long and loud that those tiresome birds would stop their endless singing."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Giant Blizzard. "You would need my help, I believe. One of my early morning calls would turn the trembling dew-drops into icicles, and change the smiling faces of the brooks and rills into frozen images!"

"Especially if I went with you," added Giant Sleet slyly.

"Oh, I should expect to be accompanied by you and your twin brother Hail," nodded Blizzard. "I know how easily you can lock the grass and flowers in a casement of ice which they couldn't break, and Hail has a very clever, quick way of cutting off all the leaves. But the question now is how shall we capture the Spring-Maiden whose apples keep the valley fresh and fair and the people forever young!"

For a few moments the Frost Giants were silent. Many times they had tried to entrap the fair Iduna and her treasure, but they had always failed.

"I have it," said Hoar-Frost. "We must secure the help of Loki, the Prince of Mischief. He lives in Asgard near the Spring-Maiden's groves, and people say he often visits Iduna in order to refresh himself with one of her life-giving apples. Let us capture him first and then compel him to help us. We giants are fast growing old! The magic apples would renew our strength for years to come!"

"Agreed!" said North-Wind, Blizzard, Sleet, and Hail in one voice. "Loki first and then Iduna!"

After much discussion it was decided that Blizzard should undertake to capture Loki.

A short time after the council of the Frost-Giants, Loki, the Prince of Mischief, was amusing himself with a great fire which he had built on one of the hills just beyond the city of Asgard. Several times he stopped and peered into the sky to see what caused the huge shadow which seemed to hover near him. He could see nothing but a gigantic eagle whirling around the summit of the hill. Loki left his fire to gather another bundle of faggots. Suddenly the great bird swooped down very

near him. He quickly seized a long stake and struck the intruder across the back. To Loki's amazement one end of the stake stuck fast to the eagle's plumage and the Prince of Mischief could not loosen his hands from the end which he held. The eagle spread its huge dark wings and flew away over rocks and hills far to the North.

"Help! help!" screamed the terrified Loki, but although he struggled with all his might he could not escape from his captor.

When they reached a very lonely spot the eagle alighted on a mountain peak and from the black plumage stepped the Storm Giant, Blizzard, who said:

"Loki, you are in my power and you shall not escape until you promise to help the Frost Giants in a very difficult undertaking!"

"What is that?" gasped the bruised and terrified Loki.

"You must help us to capture Iduna, the Spring-Maiden, and the treasure which she guards. We cannot enter the valley of Spring until Iduna is made our captive."

"Help you to capture the treasure which

gives life and youth to all who partake of it!" said Loki. "Impossible!"

"Then away to the North we will go," declared the Storm Giant, putting on his eagle plumage again.

"Stop! Stop!" cried Loki in terror. "Let me think a moment!"

After a short consideration Loki took an oath that he would betray Iduna and her treasure into the hands of the Frost Giants. Then the Prince of Mischief was freed, and back to the North sped Blizzard.

The next day late in the afternoon, Iduna, robed in a trailing garment of green and crowned with a coronet of blossoms, was walking through one of her loveliest groves. The leaves were dancing to the music of a gentle breeze. A delicious fragrance of hyacinths and roses scented the valley. She sat down near a cool fountain and placed her treasure-casket of apples on the marble basin.

Presently a long shadow darkened the path near her, and looking up quickly the Spring-Maiden saw Loki standing near.

"I have come for the refreshing gift of one

of your apples, Iduna," said he. "A long journey has wearied my limbs and broken my spirit."

"You are very welcome to one of them," said Iduna, opening her box. "It has been some time since you tasted a golden apple."

Loki began to eat the precious gift, and Iduna watched him closely. She was very proud of her refreshing fruit.

In a little while he put the half-eaten apple on the basin of the fountain and said, "I am going to tell you a secret, Iduna. Not far away from here I discovered a grove where a marvellous tree grows. It bears fruit shaped like yours but larger and of a deep golden colour."

"Oh!" laughed the Spring-Maiden, "the fruit may be larger and more beautiful than mine, but I'm sure it has not the power to put youth and life into those who partake of it."

"I am afraid you are mistaken," said the wily Loki. "People who have eaten the fruit of this tree say that its refreshing power is wonderful. If you wish, I will gladly guide

you to the grove—it is not far away—and then you can compare this fruit, which is attracting much attention, with yours. Will you go?"

"Yes, I will indeed," said Iduna, who could not believe that any other apples were comparable with hers.

Loki led the way and Iduna, carrying her treasure, followed him eagerly. She was a little surprised to find the grove Loki described so far away from Asgard, but her desire to find fruit more wonderful than the magic apples urged her on. Finally they reached a meadow bordered by a dense forest.

"Look," said Loki, pointing forward, "we shall soon reach the place."

Suddenly a dark shadow fell across Iduna's path. The Storm Giant, disguised in eagle's plumage, swooped down, caught the Spring-Maiden and her golden apples in his talons, and sped away to the frozen North. There the Frost Giants imprisoned the captive in one of their ice-palaces.

It was not long before the joyous valley of Spring felt the absence of Iduna. The flowers

drooped and faded; the grass became parched and brown, and the tender green foliage turned to burnt orange, crimson, and russet.

"What has become of Iduna?" cried the people. "See how the valley is changing!"

Slowly but surely the Frost Giants were working their way toward the valley of Spring. One night Hoar Frost stalked along the outskirts of the groves and withered the leaves and flowers with his icy breath. The next morning the people heard the dismal howl of North-Wind. "We must find the Spring-Maiden or we shall die," they cried in alarm.

In their distress they begged Odin, the wise hero who governed Asgard, to call a special council in order to determine how the secret of Iduna's disappearance could be discovered.

Odin called together his hero council and after earnest thought they decided to question Loki, the Prince of Mischief. He had seldom been seen in Asgard since the Spring-Maiden had left the valley. One of the heroes declared that the last time he saw Iduna she was walking with Loki.

The Prince of Mischief was accordingly summoned to appear in the council of heroes. His answers to the questions they asked him aroused suspicion.

"Tell us the truth about this matter," said the hero Thor, in a voice which shook like the roar of distant thunder.

Then the cowardly Loki confessed the plot which robbed the valley of the Spring-Maiden and her magic apples.

"Loki," said Odin sternly, "I command you to bring back Iduna. Let there be no delay, for even the heroes of Asgard are suffering in her absence!"

Loki knew he dared not disobey this final command. He disguised himself in falcon's plumage and sped away to the desolate North where a dull leaden sky overhung all the land. In circling about the icebergs he spied the Storm-Giant, fishing from the top of a large rock. Loki descended quickly, flew into one of the openings of the Giant's ice-palace, and made his way to the place where Iduna lay sleeping on a rough couch. The Prince of

Mischief stepped out of his disguise and awakened the Spring-Maiden.

"False Loki," she cried. "Have you come to do more mischief?"

"I have been sent by Odin to rescue you," said he. "You can escape only by the help of my magic."

Then he transformed Iduna and the precious casket of apples, placed them in a magic nutshell, put on his falcon plumage, and flew away toward Asgard.

As he sped across the dull sky the Storm-Giant looked up and saw him.

"It is Loki disguised as a falcon," he said. "He is taking the Spring-Maiden back to Asgard. But he shall not escape me!" Instantly the Storm-Giant put on his eagle plumage and flew after Loki.

How anxiously the people of Asgard watched for the return of Loki with Iduna. They heaped great piles of chips around the walls of Asgard and held torches ready to light the fires in case the Frost Giants came near.

On the third day after Loki's departure from Asgard, the people saw two great birds

flying with lightning speed toward the city.

"It is the Storm Giant following Loki," they cried. "What a furious pursuit! See! See! The eagle is gaining on the falcon! Light the fires as soon as Loki passes over! Ready! The fires!" Another moment of breathless suspense! The falcon swept over the walls of Asgard. Instantly a blaze burst forth all around the city. The falcon had won the mighty race. The eagle whirled far above the flames and looked down into the city. He dared not descend. With a cry of despair he sped back to the ice-bound Northland.

"The joyous Spring-Maiden is ours again," cried the happy people as they gathered around Iduna. "Her presence fills us with life and hope. See, the casket of golden apples is safe in her hands! Soon all nature will be fair and beautiful. The Spring-Maiden is our joy."

HOW THE BLUEBIRD WAS CHOSEN HERALD*

JAY T. STOCKING

QUERY QUEER was the boy who loved the woods and asked so many questions. The Wise-and-Wonder-Man was the spirit of the woods whom Query met one day and who answered Query's questions. Of course, as Query often went to the woods it was quite certain that he should sometime meet the spirit again. And so he did. It happened one day just as the snow was disappearing and the sun was growing warm. Query had been taking his first spring walk, and, as he was a bit tired, he sat down on the sunny slope of a knoll. He was scarcely seated when down out of the green boughs of a hemlock tree in front of him slid the Wise-and-Wonder-Man, dressed in his light blue suit with every button a silver bell, and his pointed cap to match,

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with its fringe of silver bells. At every move he made, the bells went *tinkle-tankle, tinkle-tankle.* Query was so surprised that he almost forgot to breathe.

"Good morning, Query," said the Wise-and-Wonder-Man, "what are you wondering about now?"

"I was just wondering," said Query, nodding his head toward a bluebird near by, "why the bluebird is the first bird of spring."

"Why, he is the herald, you know."

"But how did he come to be the herald? Do you know?"

"I have heard," said the Wise-and-Wonder-Man.

"Who told you?"

"My grandmother. She said her grandmother's grandmother's grandmother told the story; and what her grandmother's grandmother's grandmother said, my grandmother says is so."

"Of course," said Query. "Would you tell me the story?"

"Certainly; make yourself comfortable."

Query lay down on one elbow and the Wise-

and-Wonder-Man sat on a fresh, clean chip, that the choppers had made, and talked.

"You know there are four spirits of the year, Springtime, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Some folks call them seasons, but they are *really* spirits. Of all four spirits, Springtime is the favourite. He had been coming to the earth every year for a great many years, year after year, when he got it into his head that it would be a fine thing and quite becoming to his dignity to have a herald,—some one to carry his colours and play the fife. At first he thought of the fragrant flowers, they could bear his colours. But he reflected that they could not play the fife. Then he thought of the buzzing bee; he might be taught to play the fife. But he remembered that he would not do, because he could not carry the colours. So he decided that he must have a bird.

"Springtime, being a very lively and practical spirit, called the birds together that very morning. He asked them all to meet him by the Great Rock under the Great Tree by the Great Bend of the Big River. They all came —birds of every size and colour and descrip-

tion. He sat on the Great Rock while the birds sat on the grass and listened with wide, round, blinking eyes and with heads cocked to one side.

"He made a speech to them of some length. He told them that he desired a herald to carry his colours and to play the fife. Of course, the bird to be chosen should be handsome and musical. But he must be more than all that. He wanted a bird of exceptionally good character, in fact, the very best bird that could be found. He did not expect to find a perfect bird, he said, but he desired a bird as nearly perfect as he could obtain. He concluded his speech by saying that his herald should be:

> " 'Both handsome and happy, gifted and good,
> And as modest as modest can be.
> The very best bird that flies in the wood,
> I would that my herald be he.'

The choice, he said, he would leave to the birds as they knew each other thoroughly.

"The birds put their heads together and talked in at least forty different languages. Finally, their spokesman told Springtime that

they were content to leave the selection to a committee of six whom he might name. As Springtime wanted to be on good terms with all the birds, he thought it not best that he should appoint the committee. He pulled a handful of grass and held it tightly between his hands just so that the ends would stick out, and then he asked the birds to come up, one by one, and pull out a blade. The six who should draw out the shortest blades of grass were to be the committee.

"They walked up one by one, and drew. Mr. Crow drew the shortest blade and so was the chairman. Mr. Parrot came next, then Mr. Blue Jay, Mr. Robin, Mr. English Sparrow, and Mr. Bluebird. It was a strange committee, to be sure, of all sizes and kinds of birds.

"That very evening the six birds met in a corner of Mr. Farmer's orchard upon a dead branch of an old apple tree. They talked and talked and talked. They discussed all the birds that they knew, spoke of their good qualities and their bad ones.

"At last, as it grew late, very late, almost eight o'clock, and they had come to no conclu-

sion, Mr. Bluebird proposed that they should vote, and all agreed. But how should they vote? That was the next question. Mr. Bluebird suggested that each one, as his name was called, should stand up and say which bird he thought was best fitted to be the herald. Mr. Crow cleared his throat and said that he did not think this was the wisest way. He thought it better, he continued, that each one should write the name of his choice on the under side of a leaf. The other members of the committee agreed with Mr. Crow. Each bird, therefore, took a leaf, and wrote a name upon it, and Mr. Bluebird counted the votes. There was one vote for Mr. Crow, one vote for Mr. Parrot, one for Mr. Blue Jay, one for Mr. Robin, one for Mr. English Sparrow, and one for—I don't remember whether it was for Mr. Song Sparrow or Mr. Bobolink. Would you believe it?—every bird except the bluebird had voted for himself. The bluebird knew, because he knew the foot-writing of all the birds. He had seen it in the soft sand by the water.

"It was certain that they were not going to

be able to decide among themselves who should be chosen, so Mr. Bluebird made another suggestion.

"'I recommend,' he said, 'that we go and consult the old Wizard, Mr. Owl, who holds court every night by the light of the moon in the hollow of a great grey tree over the ridge. He is the wisest of birds and knows everything. I have heard, too, that whenever there is a star with a tail in the sky he can read your fortunes and your character. Now it so happens that at this very time there is in the sky a star with a tail, for I saw it this morning. Little Bluey, my eldest child, woke up very early and I had to fly out to get him a worm to keep him quiet. Just as I was starting, long before sunrise, I saw the comet. I propose that we go at once and consult the Wizard and let him decide for us who should be the herald.'

"'It seems to me,' said the crow, 'that this is a most excellent suggestion. The Wizard is certainly a very wise bird. I have heard of him and doubtless he has heard of me. By all means, let us go.'

"It was decided then and there that they should go that very night, just as soon as the comet rose. Mr. Bluebird was to give the signal because he knew where to look for the comet.

"At the proper moment Mr. Bluebird shook them all by the wing and woke them up, and they started, Mr. Crow going first, then Mr. Parrot, Mr. Blue Jay, Mr. Robin, Mr. English Sparrow, and Mr. Bluebird.

"They flew and they flew and they flew, for it was a long way and a hard way to find, and not one of the six had ever been out so late in his life. When they reached the wood they were obliged to fly very carefully, so that they should not bump their heads against the trees, and so that they might be able to read the signs along the way. At length they spied a great grey tree, with a dimly lighted window in it, far up the trunk. Mr. Crow read the name on the door-plate and announced that they had reached the right house. There was no door-bell so Mr. Crow scratched three times,—scratch, scratch, scratch.

" 'Who-who?' came from within.

" 'Friends,' said the crow, 'six friends come to consult the Wizard.'

"The latch was promptly lifted and the six birds walked solemnly in and up the stairs.

"They found themselves in a little dark round room with seats against the sides. Mr. Owl sat over on one side, his great fluffy coat turned up at the neck and his fluffy hood pulled down to meet it. He had his spectacles on and was reading by the light of his lamp,—that is, it looked like a lamp, but Mr. Owl explained later that it was not a lamp but the comet's light which he caught through a knot-hole.

"The Wizard received them pleasantly and motioned to them to be seated. Mr. Crow sat down in front of the Wizard at his right, then the others in order, Mr. Bluebird sitting at the left.

" 'It is very late,' observed the owl. 'It must be most important business that brings you to me at this hour of the night.'

" 'It is,' replied the crow, 'exceedingly important business, indeed.'

"Then in plain and emphatic words he told

the Wizard what their errand was. He repeated as nearly as he could the speech of Springtime, especially the last words:

> "'Both handsome and happy, gifted and good,
> And as modest as modest can be,
> The very best bird that flies in the wood,
> I would that my herald be he.'

"He told the Wizard of their inability to decide who should be chosen and of their conclusion to leave the choice to him. This was the reason of their visit.

"Then the owl looked grave as a judge and remarked, 'It seems to me in this situation that the first thing to be done is to secure the opinion of each of you as to who is the fittest bird to be chosen. Mr. Crow, will you be so good as to give us your opinion?'

"Mr. Crow stood up, cleared his throat, and said, 'To speak quite frankly, it seems to me that I, myself, should be chosen. It is scarcely possible to find a better bird.'

"'What makes you think so?' asked the owl dryly.

"'My wife,' said the crow. 'Only to-day

Mrs. Crow said to me, "Mr. Crow, my dear husband, you are a perfect man, unless—"

" 'Unless what?' inquired the Wizard, raising his eyebrows.

" 'I don't recollect,' replied the crow, 'in fact, I didn't hear distinctly, but I am sure it was something unimportant,' and he sat down.

" 'Mr. Parrot,' said the Wizard, 'your opinion, if you please.'

" 'It is my opinion,' said Mr. Parrot, 'that I am the bird who should be chosen. I have heard myself talk on many an occasion, and I am sure that I speak both wisdom and wit. In modesty, I forbear to say more.'

" 'Mr. Blue Jay!' called the Wizard.

" 'Since you ask me, Mr. Wizard, for my honest opinion I am bound to say that I feel that I am the only bird for this position. I have been looking in the glass to-day; in fact, I see myself in the glass very often, and I have never yet observed a single fault in myself. There is no bird who can say more.'

" 'Mr. Robin, if you please.'

"Mr. Robin arose with his fingers in his

armholes: 'I am quite convinced, Mr. Wizard, from much observation, that I should be made the herald. I am handsome and gifted, if I do say it myself. Besides, I live in the best of society; I dwell in the Bishop's orchard. This very day I heard the Bishop say, "That robin is a fine, handsome bird,—as fine and handsome as a Bishop." I am sure that recommendation is enough.'

"'Mr. English Sparrow.'

"'I am sure, Mr. Wizard,' said the sparrow, speaking very rapidly and excitedly, 'that while I am not so big as some of these who have spoken, I have a better claim than any of them to this high office. For I have long made it a practice to study carefully the faults and weaknesses of all the other birds, and I know that I have none of these failings.'

"'Mr. Bluebird,' said the Wizard, 'what have you to say?'

"'Nothing, Mr. Wizard. I have not made up my mind. I leave the matter entirely to your eminent wisdom and judgment.' And he sat down.

"'Well,' said the owl, after a moment's de-

liberation, 'the next thing to do under these circumstances seems to be to read your fortunes, that is, your characters, in the light of the comet. I shall ask you, one by one, to step up on this judgment-seat at my left, where the light of the comet can fall on you and where I can see you plainly. Mr. Crow, will you be the first?'

"Mr. Crow stepped up to the judgment-seat very confidently, while the Wizard put on his spectacles and turned the lamp so that the light fell full upon the glossy feathers of the large black bird. It was a revolving seat, which the Wizard turned round and round slowly so that he could see all sides of the bird. 'A fine bird,' he said, very deliberately, as if thinking aloud, 'a perfect bird, unless—unless what?—let me see—ah, a slant in the left eye—in *both* eyes—a *very decided* slant—very sly—very cunning—inclined to steal—very *much* inclined to steal—a thief, in fact; steals Mr. Farmer's corn and peas—especially in the early morning when nobody is around—a *very bad* fault—one of the worst. I am quite sure, Mr. Crow, that Springtime would not

choose you for his herald—he could not trust you. That will do. Mr. Parrot!'

"Mr. Parrot walked up very sedately and took his place on the judgment-seat. The Wizard gazed at him gravely and stroked his back. 'Fine feathers—green, red—yellow—fine feathers—rather small head—large tongue—large tongue, small head—talks more than he thinks—talks *very much* more than he thinks—talks often *without* thinking—says what he hears others say. Tongue rather harsh, too—and blisters at the end—bad words! bad words! I am sorry to say, Mr. Parrot, that I cannot recommend you as herald. People would not be glad to see you year after year. That will do. Mr. Blue Jay!'

"The blue jay stepped up very jauntily and took the seat.

"The Wizard looked at him admiringly, for he was clad in a beautiful tailor-made suit that fitted him to perfection. 'A handsome bird,' he said, 'a handsome bird,—that is, handsome clothes. Eye very good, too—a little slant, a little slant—but on the whole a good eye. Let

me see, what is this on the back of the head? these long feathers?—oh, a crest! I see. Just for decoration. A vain bird, vain as a peacock—and like all vain people, hard to get along with—and very unfriendly—likes to flock alone—other folks not quite good enough. I regret to inform you, Mr. Blue Jay, that Springtime would not desire you as his herald. That will do. Mr. Robin!'

"The robin hopped up on the seat in his fine dress suit and red shirt-front, his chest inflated and his eyes shining. The Wizard looked at him intently for some time, then he began, 'You are the Bishop's friend, you say. Let me see—a bright red spot on your bill—the Bishop's cherries, I should say—but we'll let that pass. Eye very suspicious—*very* suspicious—always looking even among your best friends, to see if somebody isn't going to harm you—cannot pull a worm out of the Bishop's garden without looking around suspiciously all the time. A very unhappy frame of mind to be in—unhappy for you—unhappy for others. You would hardly do for the herald. That will do. Mr. English Sparrow!'

"The English sparrow fluttered up noisily and took his place. 'You say,' began the Wizard, 'that you have not the faults of the other birds.'

" 'Yes,' said the sparrow, talking very fast, 'I am not as mean as the crow, and I don't talk such nonsense as old Polly, and I'm not so stuck up as the jay, and I am not suspicious as the Bishop's friend is. I haven't any of the faults of the other birds.'

"The Wizard pushed his spectacles up on his brow, turned the light away, and looked at him, 'I see,' he said, 'I do not need the comet light at all. I could see you in the dark. Sharp bill—sharp tongue—sharp claws, in a continual state of bad temper—very quarrelsome—very unpleasant neighbour; in fact, a common nuisance. That will do. Mr. Bluebird!'

" 'I am sure, Mr. Owl,' said the bluebird, rising, 'that I need not take your time. I am not the bird to be chosen, for I know that I am far from being a perfect bird. I have many faults. There are many nobler birds

than I from whom Springtime may choose his herald.'

"But the Wizard was quite insistent that the bluebird should come forward where he could read his fortune.

" 'You say that you have many faults,' remarked the Owl. 'That may be, but I see by the light of the comet that they are small, very faint indeed. Besides, the ability to see one's faults and the desire to correct them is the greatest of virtues. There may be better birds, but I am frank to say that I am not acquainted with them. I have no hesitation, Mr. Bluebird, in saying that it is my judgment that you should be the herald of the Spring, for, if you will permit me to say it, it seems that you are

> " 'Both handsome and happy, gifted and good,
> And as modest as modest can be,'

whereat Mr. Bluebird blushed painfully, while in his heart he was very happy.

"Springtime agreed with Mr. Owl, and posted notices on every tree by the water's

edge that Mr. Bluebird should henceforth be his herald, the first bird of the spring.

"There is one now on the branch of that old tree," said the Wise-and-Wonder-Man. "He is carrying the colours and playing the fife."

"What is he saying?" asked Query.

"Well," said the Wise-and-Wonder-Man, "it always sounds to me as if he were saying, 'Pur-i-ty, pur-i-ty,' but I asked him one day and he said it was only, 'Spring-is-here, spring-is-here.'"

THE SPRINGTIME *

EUGENE FIELD

A CHILD once said to his grandsire: "Gran'pa, what do the flowers mean when they talk to the old oak-tree about death? I hear them talking every day, but I cannot understand; it is all very strange."

The grandsire bade the child think no more of these things; the flowers were foolish prattlers,—what right had they to put such notions into a child's head? But the child did not do his grandsire's bidding; he loved the flowers and the trees, and he went each day to hear them talk.

It seems that the little vine down by the stone wall had overheard the South Wind say to the rosebush: "You are a proud, imperious beauty now, and will not listen to my suit; but wait till my boisterous brother comes from

* From "A Little Book of Profitable Tales," by Eugene Field, copyright 1889; published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

the North,—then you will droop and wither and die, all because you would not listen to me and fly with me to my home by the Southern sea."

These words set the little vine to thinking; and when she had thought for a long time she spoke to the daisy about it, and the daisy called in the violet, and the three little ones had a very serious conference; but, having talked it all over, they came to the conclusion that it was as much of a mystery as ever. The old oak-tree saw them.

"You little folks seem very much puzzled about something," said the oak-tree.

"I heard the South Wind tell the rosebush that she would die," exclaimed the vine, "and we do not understand what it is. Can you tell us what it is to die?"

The old oak-tree smiled sadly.

"I do not call it death," said the old oak-tree; "I call it sleep,—a long, restful, refreshing sleep."

"How does it feel," inquired the daisy, looking very full of astonishment and anxiety.

"You must know," said the oak-tree, "that

after many, many days we all have had such merry times and have bloomed so long and drunk so heartily of the dew and sunshine and eaten so much of the goodness of the earth that we feel very weary and we long for repose. Then a great wind comes out of the North, and we shiver in its icy blast. The sunshine goes away, and there is no dew for us nor any nourishment in the earth, and we are glad to go to sleep."

"Mercy on me!" cried the vine, "I shall not like that at all! What, leave this smiling meadow and all the pleasant grass and singing bees and frolicsome butterflies? No, old oak-tree, I would never go to sleep; I much prefer sporting with the winds and playing with my little friends, the daisy and the violet."

"And I," said the violet, "I think it would be dreadful to go to sleep. What if we never should wake up again!"

The suggestion struck the others dumb with terror,—all but the oak-tree.

"Have no fear of that," said the old oak-tree, "for you are sure to awaken again, and

when you have awakened the new life will be sweeter and happier than the old."

"What nonsense!" cried the thistle. "You children shouldn't believe a word of it. When you go to sleep you die, and when you die there's the last of you!"

The old oak-tree reproved the thistle; but the thistle maintained his abominable heresy so stoutly that the little vine and the daisy and the violet were quite at a loss to know which of the two to believe,—the old oak-tree or the thistle.

The child heard it all and was sorely puzzled. What was this death, this mysterious sleep? Would it come upon him, the child? And after he had slept awhile would he awaken? His grandsire would not tell him of these things; perhaps his grandsire did not know.

It was a long, long summer, full of sunshine and bird-music, and the meadow was like a garden, and the old oak-tree looked down upon the grass and flowers and saw that no evil befell them. A long, long play-day it was to the little vine, the daisy, and the violet. The

crickets and the grasshoppers and the bumblebees joined in the sport, and romped and made music till it seemed like an endless carnival. Only every now and then the vine and her little flower friends talked with the old oak-tree about that strange sleep and the promised awakening, and the thistle scoffed at the old oak-tree's cheering words. The child was there and heard it all.

One day the great wind came out of the North. Hurry-scurry! back to their warm homes in the earth and under the old stone-wall scampered the crickets and bumblebees to go to sleep. Whirr, whirr! Oh, but how piercing the great wind was; how different from his amiable brother who had travelled all the way from the Southern sea to kiss the flowers and woo the rose!

"Well, this is the last of us!" exclaimed the thistle; "we're going to die, and that's the end of it all!"

"No, no," cried the old oak-tree; "we shall not die; we are going to sleep. Here, take my leaves, little flowers, and you shall sleep warm under them. Then, when you awaken,

you shall see how much sweeter and happier the new life is."

The little ones were very weary indeed. The promised sleep came very gratefully.

"We would not be so willing to go to sleep if we thought we should not awaken," said the violet.

So the little ones went to sleep. The little vine was the last of all to sink to her slumbers; she nodded in the wind and tried to keep awake till she saw the old oak-tree close his eyes, but her efforts were vain; she nodded and nodded, and bowed her slender form against the old stone wall, till finally she, too, had sunk into repose. And then the old oak-tree stretched his weary limbs and gave a last look at the sullen sky and at the slumbering little ones at his feet; and with that, the old oak-tree fell asleep too.

The child saw all these things, and he wanted to ask his grandsire about them, but his grandsire would not tell him of them; perhaps his grandsire did not know.

The child saw the Storm King come down from the hills and ride furiously over the

meadows and over the forest and over the town. The snow fell everywhere, and the North Wind played solemn music in the chimneys. The Storm King put the brook to bed, and threw a great mantle of snow over him; and the brook that had romped and prattled all the summer and told pretty tales to the grass and flowers,—the brook went to sleep too. With all his fierceness and bluster, the Storm King was very kind; he did not awaken the old oak-tree and the slumbering flowers. The little vine lay under the fleecy snow against the old stone-wall and slept peacefully, and so did the violet and the daisy. Only the wicked old thistle thrashed about in his sleep as if he dreamt bad dreams, which, all will allow, was no more than he deserved.

All through that winter—and it seemed very long—the child thought of the flowers and the vine and the old oak-tree, and wondered whether in the springtime they would awaken from their sleep; and he wished for the springtime to come. And at last the springtime came. One day the sunbeams flut-

tered down from the sky and danced all over the meadow.

"Wake up, little friends!" cried the sunbeams,—"wake up, for it is springtime!"

The brook was the first to respond. So eager, so fresh, so exuberant was he after his long winter sleep, that he leaped from his bed and frolicked all over the meadow and played all sorts of curious antics. Then a little bluebird was seen in the hedge one morning. He was calling to the violet.

"Wake up, little violet," called the bluebird. "Have I come all this distance to find you sleeping? Wake up, it is the springtime!"

That pretty little voice awakened the violet.

"Oh, how sweetly I have slept!" cried the violet; "how happy this new life is! Welcome, dear friends!"

And presently the daisy awakened, fresh and beautiful, and then the little vine, and, last of all, the old oak-tree. The meadow was green, and all around were the music, the fragrance, the new, sweet life of the springtime.

"I slept horribly," growled the thistle. "I had bad dreams. It was sleep, after all, but it ought to have been death."

The thistle never complained again; for just then a four-footed monster stalked through the meadow and plucked and ate the thistle and then stalked gloomily away; which was the last of the sceptical thistle,—truly a most miserable end!

"You said the truth, dear old oak-tree!" cried the little vine. "It was not death,—it was only a sleep, a sweet, refreshing sleep, and this awakening is very beautiful."

They all said so,—the daisy, the violet, the oak-tree, the crickets, the bees, and all the things and creatures of the field and forest that had awakened from their long sleep to swell the beauty and the glory of the springtime. And they talked with the child, and the child heard them. And although the grandsire never spoke to the child about these things, the child learned from the flowers and trees a lesson of the springtime which perhaps the grandsire never knew.

THE SELFISH GIANT

Oscar Wilde

EVERY afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.

It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach trees that in the spring time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. "How happy we are here!" they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle.

When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

"What are you doing there?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

"My own garden is my own garden," said the Giant; "any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself." So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board—

TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED

He was a very selfish giant.

The poor children had nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside.

"How happy we were there," they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it, as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, and when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. "Spring has forgotten this garden," they cried, "so we will live here all the year around." The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. "This is a delightful spot," he said; "we must ask the Hail on a visit." So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could

go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

"I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming," said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; "I hope there will be a change in the weather."

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. "He is too selfish," she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him

through the open casement. "I believe the Spring has come at last," said the Giant, and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see?

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. "Climb up! little boy," said the Tree, and it bent its

branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.

And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" he said; "now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever." He was really very sorry for what he had done.

So he crept down-stairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant strode up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any

longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. "It is your garden now, little children," said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him goodbye.

"But where is your little companion?" he said; "the boy I put into the tree." The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.

"We don't know," answered the children. "He has gone away."

"You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow," said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.

Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was

never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. "How I would like to see him!" he used to say.

Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said; "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.

Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.

Down-stairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across, and

came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, "Who hath dared to wound thee?" For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.

"Who hath dared to wound thee?" cried the Giant; "tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him."

"Nay!" answered the child; "but these are the wounds of Love."

"Who art thou?" said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden; to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise."

THE PROMISED PLANT

ANDREA HOFER PROUDFOOT

THERE was once a promise made to all the people of the world, and every one was waiting and had been waiting long for it to be kept.

No one could remember who had made the promise, but the little children were told that it was made by a great King who knew everything that had ever happened, and all things that would ever be.

And this was the promise:

A wonderful flower was to grow in a certain garden that would bring to the one who owned the garden all the good things in the world.

Every one waited and waited for the flower to come. Years and years they had waited —summer after summer; each new little boy and girl that came into the world was told of the great promise, and among the very first things they did was to go about seeking the flower and asking questions about it.

But no one could tell them anything except to repeat the promise that a beautiful gift-plant would some day grow upon the earth, which only people with loving hearts could see, and they should be greatly blessed.

Every one in the whole world went about looking for this flower; even though they did a great deal of work, and thought of other things, yet they never quite forgot the wonderful promise.

Many of them prepared the soil and made beautiful gardens to receive it. Some sought far and wide for rare seeds and bulbs which they planted and watered, but only such plants grew as every one had seen before, and so they still waited and searched.

Many others wished and wished, and some prayed and prayed, but the precious seed did not come.

The rich men of the land had great parks laid out; the ground was tilled and everything kept ready for the plant to find root. Many gardeners and watchers were hired to stay there and watch for this wondrous flower and guard it—but it did not come.

Yet no one ever doubted the promise, for every one wished very much to have all the good things which were to come with this flower.

Among all these people there was one very kind woman, who did many good deeds. She loved and cared for little children who had no one to help them. One night when she came home from her work what did she see in a little broken flower-pot that stood in her window?

A tiny plant which she had never noticed before! She watered it and it grew and grew, and she learned to love it.

One day while she was looking at the tiny plant she remembered the promise, and said quietly to herself: "Can it be that this is the beautiful flower the whole world is waiting for! I think it is, for it has made me so happy."

And it was the flower.

She knew the promise had come because it made her so happy.

Every one, far and near, came to see it; and they begged pieces and seeds to plant.

And though the good woman gave of her plant, it grew larger and larger, and she became happier and happier.

One day it blossomed wide and beautiful.

The rich men who had made great parks and gardens for the flower would not believe the woman had received the real promised plant. They shook their heads and laughed at it all, and went on seeking after other seeds and plants.

But the people who believed because they saw how happy it made the woman to whom the flower came, brought rich gifts to her and begged for the seed, and they took it home and planted it everywhere, that the whole world might be filled with joy and peace.

BRIER ROSE

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
AND NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

A LONG time ago there lived a king and a queen, who said every day, "If only we had a child"; but for a long time they had none.

It fell out once, as the Queen was bathing, that a frog crept out of the water on to the land and said to her: "Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has passed you shall bring a daughter into the world."

The frog's words came true. The Queen had a little girl who was so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy, and prepared a great feast. He invited not only his relations, friends and acquaintances, but the fairies, in order that they might be favourably and kindly disposed toward the child. There were thirteen of them in the kingdom, but as the King had only twelve

golden plates for them to eat off, one of the fairies had to stay at home.

The feast was held with all splendour, and when it came to an end the fairies all presented the child with magic gifts. One gave her virtue, another beauty, a third riches, and so on, with everything in the world that she could wish for.

When eleven of the fairies had said their say, the thirteenth suddenly appeared. She wanted to revenge herself for not having been invited. Without greeting any one, or even glancing at the company, she called out in a loud voice, "The Princess shall prick herself with a distaff in her fifteenth year and shall fall dead"; and without another word she turned and left the hall.

Every one was terror-stricken, but the twelfth fairy, whose wish was still unspoken, stepped forward. She could not cancel the curse, but could only soften it, so she said: "It shall not be death, but a deep sleep lasting a hundred years, into which your daughter shall fall."

The King was so anxious to guard his dear

child from the misfortune that he sent out a command that all the distaffs in the whole kingdom should be burned.

All the promises of the fairies came true.

The Princess grew up so beautiful, modest, kind, and clever that every one who saw her could not but love her. Now it happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old the King and Queen were away from home, and the Princess was left alone in the castle. She wandered about over the whole place, looking at rooms and halls as she pleased, and at last she came to an old tower. She ascended a narrow winding staircase and reached a little door. A rusty key was sticking in the lock, and when she turned it the door flew open. In a little room sat an old woman with a spindle busily spinning her flax.

"Good day, Granny," said the Princess; "what are you doing?"

"I am spinning," said the old woman, and nodded her head. "What is the thing that whirls round so merrily?" asked the Princess; and she took the spindle and tried to spin too.

But she had scarcely touched it before the

curse was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with the spindle. The instant she felt the prick she fell upon the bed which was standing near, and lay still in a deep sleep which spread over the whole castle.

The King and Queen, who had just come home and had stepped into the hall, went to sleep, and all their courtiers with them. The horses went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the doves on the roof, the flies on the wall; yes, even the fire flickering on the hearth grew still and went to sleep, and the roast meat stopped crackling; and the cook, who was pulling the scullion's hair because he had made some mistake, let him go and went to sleep. And the wind dropped, and on the trees in front of the castle not a leaf stirred.

But round the castle a hedge of brier roses began to grow up; every year it grew higher, till at last it surrounded the whole castle so that nothing could be seen of it, not even the flags on the roof.

But there was a legend in the land about the lovely sleeping Brier Rose, as the King's

daughter was called, and from time to time princes came and tried to force a way through the hedge into the castle. But they found it impossible, for the thorns, as though they had hands, held them fast, and the princes remained caught in them without being able to free themselves.

After many, many years a prince came again to the country and heard an old man tell of the castle which stood behind the brier hedge, in which a most beautiful maiden called Brier Rose had been asleep for the last hundred years, and with her slept the King, Queen, and all her courtiers. He knew also, from his grandfather, that many princes had already come and sought to pierce through the brier hedge, and had remained caught in it and died a sad death.

Then the young Prince said: "I am not afraid; I am determined to go and look upon the lovely Brier Rose."

The good old man did all in his power to dissuade him, but the Prince would not listen to his words.

Now, however, the hundred years were just

ended, and the day had come when Brier Rose was to wake up again. When the Prince approached the brier hedge it was in blossom, and was covered with beautiful large flowers which made way for him of their own accord and let him pass unharmed, and then closed up again into a hedge behind him.

In the courtyard he saw the horses and dappled hounds lying asleep, on the roof sat the doves with their heads under their wings, and when he went into the house the flies were asleep on the walls, and near the throne lay the King and Queen; in the kitchen was the cook, with his hand raised as though about to strike the scullion, and the maid sat with the black fowl before her which she was about to pluck.

He went on farther, and all was so still that he could hear his own breathing. At last he reached the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Brier Rose was asleep. There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her; he bent down and gave her a kiss. As he touched her, Brier Rose opened her eyes and looked quite sweetly

at him. Then they went down together; and the King and Queen and all the courtiers woke up, and looked at each other with astonished eyes. The horses in the stable stood up and shook themselves, the hounds leaped about and wagged their tails, the doves on the roof lifted their heads from under their wings, looked around and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls began to crawl again, the fire in the kitchen roused itself and blazed up and cooked the food, the meat began to crackle, and the cook boxed the scullion's ears so soundly that he screamed aloud, while the maid finished plucking the fowl. Then the wedding of the Prince and Brier Rose was celebrated with all splendour, and they lived happily till they died.

PICCIOLA

ADAPTED FROM ST. SAINTINE

MANY years ago a good man, who lived in France, was thrown into prison because the King suspected him of having plotted against the government.

Within four grey stone walls, with only one small window through which the little stream of sunshine came, the poor man was kept captive for months and years. He was not allowed to speak to a living soul except his jailer who at best was but a cross old fellow. He had no work to do. There were no books to read, and his only source of amusement during many long tedious hours was drawing pictures with a bit of charcoal on the bare stone walls of his prison cell.

Fortunately, however, the poor captive was permitted to leave his cell for one hour each morning and go up a narrow winding stairway which led him into a small courtyard on all

sides of which rose high, strong prison walls. There was no roof overhead. Here the prisoner could breathe the fresh air and feel the warm sun and by looking up he could see a bit of the blue sky above.

Day after day the prison life went on in the same round without any change or hope of change. The bitterness and loneliness of the poor man's lot grew upon him as months and years passed without a word from his family or friends and without hope of ever seeing one of them again. And by and by a time came when he could no longer even find amusement in sketching upon the walls of his cell, for not one vacant spot was left in all that space where he could draw a picture. He was a very unhappy man indeed, and it is hard to say how it might have ended. But one day a new interest came into his life—an interest which changed the poor fellow from an unhappy bitter man who had come to hate everybody and everything, into one who forgot all wrong and who learned to see only the good and the beautiful in all around him. And this interest came about through the growing up

of a tiny stray seed which had been blown into the courtyard by the wind and had taken root between two of the great stones with which the courtyard was paved.

It happened that one day as the prisoner was taking his daily walk his eyes caught sight of the bright green of the little seedling just in time to save it from being crushed beneath his foot. He stopped and looked closer. Then he saw how a little plant had sent down its rootlets into the crevice between the stones and had struggled to push its head up where its green leaves might catch what they could of the scant sunshine. He thought how wonderful it was that the little seed had found courage to take root and struggle for life in the dark and gloomy courtyard of the prison. "Brave little plant," he said. "You deserve to live. I shall watch over you and guard you, for the wind and the hail are hard enemies."

Day by day he noticed how bravely it grew higher and higher and unfolded one leaf after another to the dull sunshine. He became more and more interested in the little

nursling which in time was like a dear friend and companion to him. He called it Picciola, which means, "little one," and before many days had passed, it had taken root and grown in his own heart so that there was no longer room for bitterness or memory of any wrongs.

At one time when a great hailstorm sent its cruel hail into the courtyard, the prisoner bent over Picciola to protect it and the driving hailstones fell upon his own head until the storm was over.

"My poor little Picciola," he said, "I shall not always be here to guard you from harm. Much can happen to my little plant when I am in my cell. I will build a little fence around you, then the wind cannot blow you down nor the hail cut you with sharp stones."

The cross jailer, too, took an interest in Picciola when he saw how happy the prisoner had become and he was glad to help take care of the little plant. Somehow, the jailer did not seem to be such a cross fellow as before; indeed he seemed to be quite a gentle and kind hearted man.

Now the prisoner was very happy and the days were no longer weary and without interest for Picciola was always waiting for him in the courtyard and he was sure to see something new about the little plant each morning he visited it. And Picciola grew and grew and in time put forth two beautiful blossoms and sent perfume to make glad the heart of her friend.

But one morning alas! when the prisoner went to look at Picciola he found that, in spite of all his care, she had begun to droop and wither. What could be the matter? In a moment he was on the ground examining the little plant to find out what was causing all the trouble. He soon discovered that Picciola had grown so large that there was no longer room enough for it to grow in the crevice between the stones. The sharp edges of the stones cut into the delicate stem and the poor prisoner could see that his little companion would die unless the stones could be lifted.

He was in great distress. He tried with all the strength he had to lift the stones himself;

but he could not move them. He begged the jailer to help him.

"I can do nothing for you," said the jailer. "You must ask the King; he alone has the power to say that the stones should be lifted."

"But the King is far away," said the prisoner. "There is but one way to reach him —I must write."

The poor fellow in despair sent a letter to the King begging him to save the life of his little friend, Picciola. The letter was written on a white handkerchief with a bit of charcoal. He begged the King, not for his own freedom and life, but for the life of Picciola. As soon as the King finished reading the prisoner's letter he said:

"This man is not really wicked at heart or he could not care so much for a little plant. The stones shall be raised that the little plant may live, and I will pardon this prisoner because of his great love and sacrifice for so helpless a thing as Picciola." So the prisoner was released and when he left his lonely prison cell he took Picciola with him, for she had been the beginning for him of a new happiness.

ST. FRANCIS, THE LITTLE BEDESMAN OF CHRIST *

WILLIAM CANTON

TO all living things on earth and air and water St. Francis was most gracious and loving. They were all his little brothers and sisters, and he forgot them not, still less scorned or slighted them, but spoke to them often and blessed them, and in return they showed him great love and sought to be of his fellowship. He bade his companions keep plots of ground for their little sisters the flowers, and to these lovely and speechless creatures he spoke, with no great fear that they would not understand his words. And all this was a marvellous thing in a cruel time, when human life was accounted of slight worth by fierce barons and ruffling marauders.

For the bees he set honey and wine in the

* Taken from "The Child's Book of Saints," by permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co.

winter, lest they should feel the nip of the cold too keenly; and bread for the birds, that they all, but especially "my brother Lark," should have joy of Christmastide; and when a youth gave St. Francis the turtle-doves he had snared, the Saint had nests made for them, and there they laid their eggs and hatched them, and fed from the hands of the brethren.

Out of affection a fisherman once gave him a great tench, but he put it back into the clear water of the lake, bidding it love God; and the fish played about the boat till St. Francis blessed it and bade it go.

"Why dost thou torment my little brothers the Lambs," he asked of a shepherd, "carrying them bound thus and hanging from a staff, so that they cry piteously?" And in exchange for the lambs he gave the shepherd his cloak. And at another time seeing amid a flock of goats one white lamb feeding, he was concerned that he had nothing but his brown robe to offer for it; but a merchant came up and paid for it and gave it him, and he took it with him to the city and preached about it so that the hearts of those hearing him were melted.

Fain would I tell of the coneys that took refuge in the folds of his habit, and of the swifts which flew screaming in their glee while he was preaching; but now it is time to speak of the sermon which he preached to a great multitude of birds in a field by the roadside. Down from the trees flew the birds to hear him, and they nestled in the grassy bosom of the field, and listened till he had done. And these were the words he spoke to them:

"Little birds, little sisters mine, much are you holden to God your Creator; and at all times and in every place you ought to praise Him. Freedom He has given you to fly everywhere; and raiment He has given you, double and threefold. More than this, He preserved your kind in the Ark, so that your race might not come to an end. Still more do you owe Him for the element of air, which He has made your portion. Over and above, you sow not, neither do you reap; but God feeds you, and gives you streams and springs for your thirst; the mountains He gives you, and the valleys for your refuge, and the tall trees wherein to build your nests. And because you

cannot sew or spin God takes thought to clothe you, you and your little ones. It must be, then, that your Creator loves you much, since He has granted you so many benefits. Be on your guard then against the sin of ingratitude, and strive always to give God praise."

And when the Saint ceased speaking, the birds made such signs as they might, by spreading their wings and opening their beaks, to show their love and pleasure; and when he had blessed them, they sprang up, and singing songs of unspeakable sweetness, away they streamed in a great cross to the four quarters of heaven.

PROSERPINA AND KING PLUTO

LITTLE Proserpina and Mother Ceres lived in the beautiful valley of Enna where the warm sun shone all the year round. Mother Ceres had plenty of work to do. Each day she made a journey to the meadows, orchards, and fields all over the earth. Indeed it was through her watchful care that the grass grew, and flowers bloomed, that the fruit ripened, and the precious crops of barley, wheat, and rye brought forth a bountiful harvest.

One day at dawn a shining car and a pair of restless winged dragons stood waiting to take Mother Ceres on her daily journey. The dragons were impatient to start, for they knew how much work had to be done each day. Very soon Ceres glided forth and mounted her splendid car. She was clothed in flowing robes of the softest grey and on her head she

wore a crown of scarlet poppies and golden wheat.

"Farewell, little daughter," she called. "I shall come back before the dew falls. Do not venture out of the valley to-day. Farewell!" Off sped the winged dragons with Mother Ceres. Little Proserpina did not mind being left in the valley for she found a good deal of amusement there. Her friends the naiads—beautiful water nymphs—sported about in the cool fountains. Proserpina loved to spend a quiet hour with these gentle maidens. She often played a merry game with Echo, a nymph who lived on a far-off wooded hillside; sometimes she danced in the sunshine with her little playmates.

Mother Ceres' shining car soon disappeared and little Proserpina ran to some of her companions and said, "Come, come! I hear Pan, the shepherd boy, playing the sweetest music on his reed-pipes! Let us dance in the sunshine! Come!"

In her gayest mood she led the dance to the very edge of a deep wood which bordered the valley. Then the train of little maidens

stopped suddenly and listened. Peals of boisterous laughter broke the silence. In the depths of the forest the queerest youths were rollicking about. They had snub noses, hairy ears, and tiny sprouting horns; their hips were covered with shaggy hair and their feet were exactly like a goat's.

"Hush," whispered Proserpina, "the madcap satyrs are dancing too. Let us hasten away."

"We will gather flowers and make garlands," said one of the maidens.

They slipped quietly away from the noisy wood and ran about in all directions to search for fragrant blossoms,—lilies and violets, hyacinth bells and pinks. The little maidens soon filled their arms with flowers and sat down on a mossy bank to weave garlands.

In her eagerness to find the loveliest blossoms Proserpina had sauntered off a long way from her companions. She could hear the faint echo of their merry voices in the distance.

"Oh, I have wandered out of the valley," she thought. "I must hasten back with these

lovely flowers. What beauties I have found!"

She turned to run toward the bank where her companions were sitting, when she heard a queer rumbling noise. What could it be! It sounded exactly like distant thunder, yet there was not a cloud in the blue sky overhead. There was another rumbling. Was it coming nearer? The earth beneath her feet quivered! Then in breathless fear she saw a great crack in the field! She was too frightened to move or speak. The flowers she had gathered dropped from her trembling hands. Out of the great cavity which seemed to widen every moment Proserpina saw dashing toward her four jet black horses with flashing eyes and quivering nostrils. At their heels whirled a wonderful golden chariot with jewelled wheels. Standing in this splendid car was a dark-browed man whose iron-crown was studded with precious stones of many colours. In one hand he lightly held the reins and guided the fiery steeds; in the other, he held a two-pronged fork.

"King Pluto!" gasped Proserpina. In a twinkling the King of the Underworld leaped

from his chariot, seized Proserpina in his arms, mounted his chariot again and sped away over the hills.

Proserpina's low cry of "Help! help! Mother! Mother Ceres!" was too faint to reach the ears of the merry companions who were very busy with their flowers.

"What has become of Proserpina?" cried one of them when she had finished her garland.

They looked in the direction where but a moment ago Proserpina was gathering flowers, but they could not see her.

"I wonder where she has gone," said another. "Surely she has not wandered out of the valley!"

"Proserpina! Proserpina!" called the little companions becoming alarmed.

But no answer could come from the captured maiden who was whirling along beyond the distant hills. In vain did the dark-browed King try to calm his captive by declaring that no harm should come to her. In vain did he promise that she should share his throne and his riches.

"I want to go home to Mother Ceres," sobbed Proserpina.

But King Pluto was deaf to her pleading; he urged his horses to go faster and faster until finally they came to the River Cyane whose waters began to seethe and foam in a very threatening manner. Little Proserpina knew the waters of this river were angry because she was made a captive. Quickly she loosened her girdle and flung it into the raging flood. Now King Pluto was afraid to risk his fiery steeds in the angry stream, so he determined to plunge at once into the depths of his kingdom. With his two-pronged fork he struck a mighty blow on the earth. Instantly a great crevice opened and gave him passage to the Underworld.

Phœbus Apollo had almost finished his day's journey and was driving his beautiful sun-car down the steep slope of the western sky. Mother Ceres' winged dragons were hastening to the valley of Enna. Proserpina always bounded forth with a cry of welcome, so when Mother Ceres missed her little daughter's joyous words she called, "Proserpina!

Proserpina!" There was no answer. What could be the matter! Mother Ceres' heart beat fast! She sought the little maidens of the valley who were her daughter's playmates and listened in trembling fear to the story they told about Proserpina's sudden disappearance. Ceres lighted a torch and continued her search all night. At dawn the distracted mother was in despair, for she could find no trace of her lost child. She questioned the Naiads, the Nymphs, Pan, the shepherd boy, and Echo, but not one of them could give her tidings of Proserpina. For a long time the poor mother continued her wanderings from dawn until eventide all the world over.

One day she happened to wander near the River Cyane and there floating near the water's edge she saw Proserpina's girdle. Eagerly she grasped it in her hands and stood in breathless silence. A low murmuring sound reached her ears. Did it come from a neighboring fountain? Ceres listened very carefully. "Proserpina! King Pluto!" whispered a voice from the cool depths of the clear water. In a moment Mother Ceres knew the

truth about her little daughter's disappearance. She had been captured by the King of the Underworld! Ceres could take no comfort in this knowledge for she knew King Pluto would do all in his power to keep his captive. In despair the poor mother withdrew to a dark cave to nurse her grief.

"Until Proserpina is returned to me no vegetation shall grow on the earth," vowed Mother Ceres.

The gentle rain no longer refreshed the grass and drooping flowers; the withered leaves dropped from the trees; the fruit became parched and dry, and the precious grain failed to ripen! Alas! Famine spread throughout the land!

"Mother Ceres," cried the people, "we implore you to give us your aid. Bring back the flowers and the fruit, and the grain. We shall starve without your help."

"Not until my child is returned to me," answered Ceres.

Finally Jupiter's heart was touched by the distress of the people. He sent for Mother Ceres and said, "If your daughter Proserpina

has refused to eat any of King Pluto's pomegranate seeds during her stay in the underworld she shall return to the earth and never again disappear. My swift-footed messenger Mercury shall go at once to Pluto's palace and state my will in this matter."

Mercury put on his wonderful cap and winged sandals and sped away to deliver Jupiter's message. At first King Pluto was angry when he heard that his merry little companion was to be taken from him, but of course he could not disregard Jupiter's command, so Proserpina was led back into the sunlight.

How happy Mother Ceres was! She could not keep back tears of joy.

"Now the fields shall be covered with verdure; the soft showers shall fall and earth shall bring forth a bountiful harvest!" she declared. "Proserpina, my child, you shall never again leave me. King Pluto cannot demand your return unless you have eaten some of his pomegranate seeds."

Then little Proserpina looked up into her mother's face and said, "Mother dear, I must tell you the truth. A little while before Mer-

cury came with his message I ate six of King Pluto's pomegranate seeds. I was very, very hungry, mother."

"Alas! Alas!" cried Ceres, feeling alarmed again. She hastened to Jupiter and asked him what could be done. Jupiter looked very serious, and finally decreed that for each pomegranate seed which Proserpina had eaten she should spend one month of each year in King Pluto's Kingdom.

"Six months of each year my child must spend in that dark underworld! It is dreadful!" declared Ceres.

"Do not grieve, mother," said Proserpina cheerily. "At first the dark-browed King frightened me very much but I soon found that he is kind and gracious. Let us be happy because I am to spend six months of each year here with you. During my stay with King Pluto you shall take a long rest from your hard work in the fields."

So it happened that Proserpina spent half of each year in the dark underworld. But every springtime when the warm sun gladdened the earth, Mercury was sent to bring

Proserpina back to Mother Ceres. And at the coming of the joyous little maiden the grass leaped forth in the brown fields, flowers gay brightened the meadows and from the tops of the budding trees the birds carolled songs of welcome.

THE WONDER—A PARABLE

FRIEDRICH ADOLPH KRUMMACHER

ONE day in the springtime, a youth was sitting under the palm trees in the garden of his father, the King. He was deep in thought. There came to him Nathan, the Prophet, saying, "Prince, why musest thou so earnestly under the palm trees?"

The Prince lifted his head and answered, "Nathan, I would see a wonder."

The Prophet smiled and answered: "The same wish had I also in the days of my youth."

"And was it fulfilled?" asked the King's son, hastily.

"A Man of God came to me," said Nathan, "having a pomegranate seed in his hand. 'Behold,' he said, 'what will come from this seed.' Then with his finger he made a hole in the earth, planted the seed and covered it. When he withdrew his hands the clods parted one from another and I saw two small leaves coming forth. But scarcely had I beheld them,

when they joined together and became a round stem wrapped in bark, and the stem increased before my eyes and grew higher and thicker. Then the Man of God said to me, 'Give heed!' And as I looked, I saw many branches spread forth from the stem like great arms. I marvelled but the Man of God motioned me to keep silence. 'Give heed,' he said, 'new creations begin.'

"Then he took water in the hollow of his hand from the rivulet by the wayside, and sprinkled the branches three times, and, lo, the branches were covered with green leaves, so that a cool shade spread over us and sweet odours filled the air.

" 'From whence comes this perfume and this reviving shade?" cried I.

" 'Dost thou not see,' said the Man of God, 'these crimson flowers bursting from among the green leaves and hanging in clusters?' I was about to speak but a gentle breeze moved the leaves, scattering the flowers among us, as when snow descendeth from the clouds. Scarcely had the falling flowers reached the ground when I saw the ruddy pomegranates

hanging between the leaves like the almonds on Aaron's rod. Then the Man of God left me lost in wonder."

"What is the name of this Man of God? Is he yet alive?"

"Son of David," answered the Prophet, "I have spoken to thee of a vision."

When the Prince heard these words he was grieved in his heart.

"How couldst thou deceive me thus?" he asked.

But the Prophet replied, "I have not deceived thee. Behold in thy father's garden thou mayest see in reality what I have told thee. Dost not this same wonder happen to the pomegranate trees and all the other trees in the garden?"

"Yes," answered the Prince, "but you cannot see it, and it comes to pass through a long time."

"Is it less wonderful because it cometh to pass in silence and unheeded? Learn to know nature and her workings, then wilt thou long no more for a wonder performed by the hand of man."

NATURE STORIES AND LEGENDS

GREEN THINGS GROWING

Oh, the green things growing, the green things growing,
The faint sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should love to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing.

Oh, the fluttering and the pattering of those green things growing,
How they talk to each other, when none of us are knowing.
In the wonderful white by the weird moonlight,
Of the dim dreamy dawn when the cocks are crowing.

I love them so—my green things growing,
And I think they love me without any knowing;
For by many a tender touch, they comfort me so much,
With the soft mute comfort of green things growing.

Dinah Mulock Craik.

THE STORY OF A LITTLE GRAIN OF WHEAT *

MAY BYRON

ONCE upon a time there was a little grain of Wheat. It was a tiny brown thing, quite hard and dry. It looked like somebody who had wrapped himself up in a cloak and gone to sleep, with his head and feet and all covered up. That was really what had happened. The grain of Wheat was fast asleep.

It lay outside a farm-yard gate, and a little black ant came along and saw it. "Dear me!" said the little black ant, "that will do nicely for my dinner." He was carrying it off—which was hard work, because it was nearly as big as he was—when another little black ant came along.

"I'll help you to carry that if you'll give me half," said the second ant. "Shan't!" said

* By special permission The Oxford Press, London.

the first. Then, I am sorry to say, they fought about it.

While they were biting and kicking, and the grain of Wheat was rolling about between them, a third person came along.

The third person was a little Elf-man. He was looking about for winter lodgings: and he had just found a capital place in a hollow tree at the edge of a field.

"Shocking! shocking!" said he to the two fighting ants. "Do stop, for goodness' sake!" But they did not take the least notice of him.

Then the little Elf-man thought, "If I take that grain of Wheat away, they won't have anything left to quarrel about!" And so he did.

The little Elf-man took the grain of Wheat very carefully home to his hollow tree. But when he arrived, it was all dark, because his tame glow-worm, that he kept for a candle, had felt lonely and gone out for a walk. He bumped his head trying to find things in the dark, and dropped the grain of Wheat; and it

rolled out of the tree and down into a tiny chink of the earth.

The little Elf-man was dreadfully sorry at losing it, and scolded the glow-worm when it came home. He spent many hours searching for the grain next morning.

"What are you looking for?" said his friend the Dormouse. The Dormouse lived in a hole in the hedge-bank.

"For a grain I've lost," said the Elf.

"There's a Barley grain under that loose sod," remarked the Dormouse.

"That's not it, thank you," said the Elf-man. And he went on hunting; but he had no success. It was ever so deep down.

A good many days went by, and several things happened,—rain, and wind, and sunshine, and more rain, and snow, and frost, and rain again.

They all came down to where the little grain lay underground; and its nice brown cloak did not remain smooth and dry. It became damp and sodden and dirty. Its appearance was certainly not improved

Now, if you got all wet and cold while you were asleep, supposing the wind and rain blew in on you, it would wake you up, most likely. So it fell out to the little grain of Wheat.

It woke up one day, inside its wet ragged cloak, and thrust out its small white feet. They were not like your feet, they were more like little roots—but they did very well for the Wheat. Its legs grew longer, week by week, and it grew more and more awake every day.

The more it waked, the less it liked being down there in the dark and cold. It thought, "Really, I can't stay here all my life! There's nothing to look at!"

But whenever it wanted to poke its head up and peep out, the wind made it shiver and feel miserable. So it stayed where it was, and tried to be contented. One can always *try,* anyhow.

Meanwhile the little Barley-corn under the loose sod was getting on rather badly. You see, it had not been tucked cosily into the soil like the Wheat. It was like a poor little

vagrant with no proper place to sleep in. It grew, but very slowly.

"Hullo! is that you?" said the Dormouse, peeping in one day under the sod; "are you awake?"

"I don't think I've been properly to sleep," said the Barley-corn.

"Make haste and grow a little faster, and come out of that," said the Dormouse. "I should be rather fond of you if I thought you were taking trouble to get on."

"I think if any one were fond of me," whispered the Barley-corn, "I *should grow.*"

But the Dormouse was not listening.

At last a sunbeam came along the field—several sunbeams, in fact. They were quite bright and warm, and the little Elf-man, who had kept close indoors all the bad weather, opened his door and sat on the threshold basking. Then the sunbeams burrowed right down into the earth, and said: "Hurry up! Is anybody here for out-of-doors?"

You could not have heard them; their voices were not like ours. But the grain of Wheat

heard them. At once it threw off the last rags of its tattered old cloak; and it was as clean and white as possible underneath. Then it pushed up its little green head, with a two-horned peaked cap on, and looked out curiously upon the world.

Everything was clear, and warm, and sunny, and perfectly delightful. And there was the little Elf-man sitting on his threshold, in a *one*-horned peaky green cap.

"Well, I never!" said the Elf-man. "Who's this?"

"My name's Wheat," said the little green head.

"Then you've changed very much, let me tell you," said the Elf-man; "you are not a bit like what you were; but ever so much better."

"I hope I shall go on improving," said the Wheat politely. And that is just what it actually did.

But the poor Barley-corn was only beginning to push through under the loose sod by the time the Wheat was six inches high. It was thin and stunted, just as you would be

if you had no proper food, and nobody to be fond of you.

The Wheat took no notice of it. But the Dormouse came now and then and said, "How slow you are!" The little Elf-man was rather sorry for it, but it did not occur to him to say so.

The little Elf-man came out every day, and talked to the Wheat while it grew. Very soon it was much bigger than he was; but this did not make him conceited.

"Did you have nice dreams while you were down below there?" he asked it.

"I only had one dream," said the Wheat, "but that went on all the time. I dreamed I was very tall and golden-yellow, and lived along with a crowd of brothers and sisters."

"Oh, but you didn't," said the Elf-man; "I found you all by yourself. You were a poor little lonely brown thing."

"I can't help it," said the Wheat: "that was my dream. And I have it now, sometimes, if I shut my eyes."

The little Elf-man was greatly puzzled:

but the Wheat was now so tall that he did not like to contradict.

As for the little Barley-corn, nobody took the least interest in *his* dreams. He had very delightful ones, too. But they were the kind that never come true.

The summer went on, and all sorts of friends came and talked to the Wheat—birds, bees, and butterflies. He enjoyed himself more and more. The taller he grew, the better view he had of the rest of the world.

He had very pretty green clothes, which grew bigger as he did. This was a really useful arrangement: he never required to be measured for a new suit.

One day he said to the little Elf-man, "Do your clothes change colour?"

"No," replied the Elf-man, "I always wear green. Even in the winter I can find some blades of grass to weave together, or a few leaves to stitch up into a coat."

"You don't understand me," said the Wheat. "I mean, do they turn to a different colour while you're wearing them?"

"Not that I know of," said the Elf-man.

"Well, mine do," said the Wheat. "Just look!"

Sure enough, his green clothes were turning yellow, and he was changing colour all over, too. He was very much altered altogether. It was most surprising.

"Goodness me!" said the little Elf-man.

"That's exactly what I think," said the Wheat.

About a month after this, the Elf-man was getting his breakfast ready,—an acorn-cup full of dew, and a drop of wild honey,—when he heard a loud, eager voice calling him. It was the Wheat, very much excited.

"I've had that dream several times lately," said the Wheat, rocking to and fro, "and now it has come true!"

"How do you mean?" asked the Elf-man.

"Can't you see?" said the Wheat. "I've turned golden-yellow from head to foot. And I have a whole family of children. They're not *my* brothers and sisters, of course, but

they're each other's,—so it comes to the same thing. Dear, dear, how happy I do feel!" And it rocked more than ever.

"How many are there?" asked the Elf.

"About twenty, I should think," answered the Wheat, "but I can't count them without cricking my neck."

"Well, well!" said the little Elf. "It's a large family to look after. It reminds me of a little rhyme I once heard, about an old woman who lived in a shoe."

"The more the merrier," said the Wheat. "Hush, children! Don't all talk at once!" But the little grains would not stop talking all at once; and although *you* could not have heard them—their voices were too tinkly and tiny—it was perfectly deafening to any one who could.

The Elf-man went back into his house and shut the door. Presently he had to put some cotton-willow-wool in his ears. The Wheat tried to sing its children to sleep with lullabies; but it did not know any.

"I shall never have a merry family like that, I'm afraid," said the Barley-corn to the Dor-

mouse. The Barley-corn had hardly grown two inches since the spring. In fact, he was so little, you would hardly have known he was there.

"Never mind," said the Dormouse. "You have me to talk to you, haven't you?"

By and by the Wheat got very tired. Just think, if your mother had more than twenty children, who never stopped talking all day and all night! Anyhow, the Wheat could endure it no longer. So it called to the little Elf-man, and said, "Kindly fetch me the Dormouse. I can see him now, on the bank at the end of the field. He's beginning to get sleepy, too, so please make haste."

"What do you want me for?" said the Dormouse, when he was fetched. He and the Elf stood staring up at the tall Wheat. The little grains were quieter now. They had said nearly all they had to say.

"It's like this," said the Wheat in weary tones. "I can't rock these children to sleep up here. It's too light, and too draughty. They must be put to bed in the earth, as I was. I'm

sure it's the proper place for them." As the Wheat spoke, all the little grains fell suddenly fast asleep.

"Well, I'm not a nurse," said the Dormouse, rather grumpily, because he had been disturbed. "And I can't climb your stalk and fetch them down, either."

"You must bite my stalk right through," said the Wheat, "so that we can all lie down together."

"Oh, that will hurt you dreadfully!" cried the little Elf-man.

"Then it will have to hurt, that's all," said the Wheat. "It's the only thing to do. Be quick!"

The little Elf-man threw his arms round the Wheat's yellow-stalk, and wept. But the Dormouse, with his sharp little teeth, bit through the stalk, just where it came out of the ground. The Wheat gave one great rock—and one sigh—and SNAP!—down it came. All the little grains tumbled out of their cradles, and rolled into chinks of the soil.

The tall Wheat, as it lay in the earth, said "Thank you!" in a husky voice to the Dor-

mouse, and "Good-bye!" to the little Elf-man. The wind blew it away that night, and nobody ever saw it again.

"Where's the Barley?" asked the Dormouse next day. But the poor Barley was quite shrivelled up.

The little Elf-man was sad for nearly a week. But when all the little grains woke up the following spring, he had a jollier time than ever.

THE LITTLE ACORN

Lucy Wheelock

It was a little acorn that hung on the bough of a tree. It had a tender green cup and a beautifully carved saucer to hold it. The mother oak fed it with sweet sap every day, the birds sang good-night songs above it, and the wind rocked it gently to and fro. The oak leaves made a soft green shade above it, so the sun could not shine too warm on its green cover, and it was as happy as an acorn could be.

There were many other acorns on the tree, and I am sure the mother often whispered loving words to all her babies.

The summer days were so bright and pleasant that the acorn never thought of anything but sunshine and an occasional shower to wash the dust off the leaves.

But you know that summer ends and the autumn days come. The green cup of the

acorn turned to a brown cup, and it was well that it grew stiffer and harder, for the cold winds began to blow.

The leaves turned from green to golden brown, and some of them were whisked away by the rough wind. The little acorn began to grow uneasy.

"Isn't life all summer?" it said.

"No," whispered the mother oak, "the cold days come and the leaves must go and the acorns too. I must soon lose my babies."

"Oh! I could never leave this kind bough," said the frightened acorn. "I should be lost and forgotten if I were to fall."

So it tried to cling all the closer to its bough; but at last it was alone there. The leaves were blown away, and some of them had made a blanket for the brown acorns lying on the ground.

One night the tree whispered this message to the lonely acorn: "This tree is only your home for a time. This is not your true life. Your brown shell is only the cover for a living plant, which can never be set free until the hard shell drops away, and that can never

happen until you are buried in the ground and wait for the spring to call you into life. So let go, little acorn, and fall to the ground, and some day you will wake to a new and glorious life."

The acorn listened and believed, for was not the tree its sheltering mother? So it bade her farewell, and, loosing its hold, dropped to the ground.

Then, indeed, it seemed as if the acorn were lost. That night a high wind blew and covered it deep under a heap of oak leaves. The next day a cold rain washed the leaves closer together, and trickling streams from the hillside swept some earth over them. The acorn was buried. "But I shall wake again," it said, and so it fell asleep. It might have been cold; but the frost fairies wove a soft, white snow blanket to cover it, and so it was kept warm.

If you had walked through the woods that winter, you would have said the acorn was gone, but then you could not have seen the life slumbering within the brown cover. But spring came and called to all the sleeping

things underground to waken and come forth. The acorn heard and tried to move, but the brown shell held it fast. Some raindrops trickled through the ground to moisten the shell, and one day the pushing life within was set free. The brown shell was of no more use and was lost in the ground, but the young plant was to live. It heard voices calling it upward. It must arise. "A new and glorious life," the mother oak had said.

"I must arise," the acorn said, and up the living plant came, up to the world of sunshine and beauty. It looked around. There was the same green moss in the woods, the same singing brook.

"And I shall live and grow," it said.

"Yes," called the mother oak, "you are now an oak tree. This is your real life."

And the tiny oak tree was glad and tried to stretch higher towards the sun.

THE STORY OF TWO LITTLE SEEDS

GEORGE MACDONALD

LONG, long ago, two seeds lay beside each other in the earth, waiting. It was cold, and rather wearisome and, to beguile the time, the one found means to speak to the other.

"What are you going to be?" said the one.

"I don't know," answered the other.

"For me," rejoined the first, "I mean to be a rose. There is nothing like a splendid rose. Everybody will love me then."

"It's all right," whispered the second; and that was all he could say; for somehow when he had said that, he felt as if all the words in the world were used up. So they were silent again for a day or two.

"Oh, dear!" cried the first, "I have had some water. I never knew till it was inside me. I'm growing! I'm growing! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" repeated the other, and lay still; and waited more than ever.

The first grew and grew, pushing itself straight up, till at last it felt that it was in the open air, for it could breathe. And what a delicious breath that was! It was rather cold, but so refreshing. The flower could see nothing, for it was not quite a flower yet, only a plant; and they never see till their eyes come, that is, till they open their blossoms,—then they are flowers quite. So it grew and grew, and kept its head up very steadily, meaning to see the sky the first thing, and leave the earth quite behind as well as beneath it. But somehow or other, though why it could not tell, it felt very much inclined to cry. At length it opened its eye. It was morning, and the sky *was* over its head but, alas! itself was no rose,—only a tiny white flower. It felt more inclined to hang down its head and to cry but it still resisted, and tried hard to open its eye wide, and to hold its head upright, and to look full at the sky.

"I will be a star of Bethlehem, at least!" said the flower to itself.

But its head felt very heavy and a cold wind rushed over it, and bowed it down to-

wards the earth. And the flower saw that the time of the singing of birds was not come, that the snow covered the whole land, and that there was not a single flower in sight but itself. And it half-closed its leaves. But that instant it remembered what the other flower used to say; and it said to itself, "It's all right; I will be what I can." And thereon it yielded to the wind, dropped its head to the earth, and looked no more on the sky, but on the snow. And straightway the wind stopped, and the cold died away, and the snow sparkled like pearls, and diamonds; and the flower knew that it was the holding of its head up that had hurt it so; for that its body came of the snow, and that its name was Snow-drop. And so it said once more, "It's all right!" and waited in perfect peace. All the rest it needed was to hang its head after its nature.

HOW THE FLOWERS CAME*

JAY T. STOCKING

EVER so many centuries ago the world was bare and grey as the street. The Earth King grew very tired of it, and covered the earth with a beautiful carpet of green. We call it grass. For years and years there was nothing but green, until the Earth King grew as tired of the green as he had grown of the grey. He decided that he must have more colours. So one day he took his royal retinue and journeyed to a hillside where he knew there grew the very finest grasses in all the kingdom. At a blast of the King's bugler the grasses assembled, and the King addressed them in simple words: "My faithful grasses. It is many years since I placed you here. You have been faithful. You have kept true green. It now pleases me to announce to you that I am about to reward a certain number of you and make you

*By special permission The Pilgrim Press.

to be lords and ladies of the field. To-morrow I shall come hither at this same hour. You are to assemble before me, and the fairest of your number and the most pleasing I will honour with great and lasting honour. Farewell."

Then what a whispering and putting of heads together there was among the grasses, as the breeze crept up the hillside. They arose next morning before the sun, that they might wash their ribbons in the gleaming pearls of dew. What prinking and preening! What rustling of ruffles and sashes! What burnishing of armour and spears! At length the King's bugle rang out that called them to the grand assembly. Full of excitement, they stood before the King, each hoping that he might be chosen for one of the great honours.

The King greeted them as on the previous day, and told them again of the high honour that he was about to bestow. "But," said he, " in this Court of Judgment I must have willing servants to assist me. First, I must have a keeper of the gate so that no outsider may

enter. Which one of this host will be keeper of the gate?"

Not a man-grass stirred in his tracks, for each feared that if he became a servant of the King, he would lose his chance to be made a lord.

"Which one?" asked the King again; "which one will volunteer to keep the gate for me?"

At this moment a sturdy grass was seen coming down the hillside. He was not handsome, but he was strong, his shoulders were broad, and his chest was deep, and he was armed to the teeth. Spear points stuck from every pocket, arrows filled his belt, and in each hand he carried a lance sharp as lightning. "Let these wait for their honours," thought he, as he said, "*I* will serve the King."

"So be it," said the King; "take your station at the gate. And now," continued the King, "I must have a herald to announce my awards and my commands. Who will be my herald?"

Again there was silence among the man-grasses, till at last one of them was seen to ad-

vance. He was short and round and smiling, as happy a grass as grew on the hill. He came before the King as fast as his short legs could carry him. "So it please the King, I'll be his royal herald."

"So be it," replied the King. "Stand here at my feet."

"Two torch-bearers I need," said the King; "two torch-bearers, tall and comely, to hold the lights on high. Who will serve the King as torch-bearers?"

And now there was silence and stiffness among the lady-grasses, as each, fearing to lose her chance to be made a lady, waited for the others. At length two slender maidens advanced with glowing faces and hesitant step. They were not as beautiful, it must be said, as some of their sisters. Their ribbons were few and some of them frayed. They scarcely knew whether the King would accept them, but they meekly offered themselves. "We, O King, will be your torch-bearers."

The King looked pleased enough as he replied, "So be it, indeed. Stand here on either hand."

"And now," continued the King, "I must have an incense bearer, to swing my censer over the meadows. Who will be my incense bearer?"

For a moment there was silence again among the lady-grasses, but only a moment, for out stepped one of the daintiest of them all. She tripped quickly and quietly down the hill to the King, saying modestly as she approached, "I will be your incense bearer."

"Let it be so," said the King. "Await my commands."

"Yet one more willing servant," said the King; "one more. Who will ring the chimes? Man or maid, who among all these loyal subjects will ring the chimes?"

Scarcely had the King's words left his lips, when one of the noblest grasses of all, her broad green ribbons rustling as she moved, left the crowded ranks of the ladies and eagerly advanced before the King. "If it please Your Majesty, I will ring the chimes."

Then the King looked around satisfied upon his eager and expectant audience, and spoke a few brief words to them. He had come,

he said, fearing that the task was almost too great even for a king—to choose among so many and so beautiful subjects. But they had chosen for themselves, and he had now only to award the honours.

"Keeper of the gate," he commanded, "stand before the King!"

The keeper of the gate came awkwardly forward, pricking all who brushed against him as he passed.

"Because you have been willing to serve the King," said the monarch, "I reward you with distinguished honour." Then, taking from the hand of a page a great velvet cap of purplish red, he placed it upon the head of the Gate-Keeper, saying as he did so, "I dub you: My Lord, the Thistle."

"Let the King's herald stand forth!"

The little round happy herald obeyed and knelt before the King. The King took a great golden coronet from the hand of a page and placed it upon his head, saying as he did so, "Because of your readiness to serve your King, I create you a noble of the field, and

dub you: My Lord, the Dandelion. And I give you this trumpet on which to blow."

"Let the torch-bearers stand forth!"

Then the two shy maidens from either side of the King bowed before him. On the head of each the King placed a shining crown, one all gold, and one gold rimmed with white, that they might not be confused, and he said to them, "Because of your generous deed I dub you: Lady Buttercup and Lady Daisy."

"My incense bearer!"

The dainty maiden courtesied at his feet and, blushing, bowed her head.

The King beckoned to a page, who brought him a tiny hood of most becoming blue. This the King placed upon her head, saying the while: "The King is grateful for your service. I dub you: Lady Violet."

"The ringer of the royal chimes, let her appear."

The beautiful grass with the broad, shining ribbons stood proudly before him, and bowed her head in salute. The King took a silver bell and gave it to her, saying as he did so,

"This shall be the sign of your royal office. I dub you: Lady Lily-of-the-Field."

The King then charged his new-made lords and ladies that they should be faithful to their offices and never cease, year by year, to beautify the earth. Then the assembly was dissolved, but not until the whole host of grasses on the hillside had applauded what the King had done. They were disappointed and grieved, it is true, but they were not too jealous to know that the bravest and truest and most beautiful had been crowned with honour due.

THE LEGEND OF TRAILING ARBUTUS

THE bleak wind swept across the great lakes and piled snow-drifts all around a wigwam which stood at the edge of a pine forest. An Indian pulled aside a curtain of wolf-skin and stood listening in the doorway of his rude house. His dark eyes were fixed on the richly-tinted western sky. Long hair white as the frost fell about his bent shoulders and framed a thin dark face deeply lined with wrinkles.

"I thought I heard footsteps," he muttered in a weak voice. He drew a deerskin mantle close about his shoulders, turned from the doorway and sat down on a mat of beaver fur which lay before a few dying embers. A shiver ran through his gaunt figure. He stirred the smouldering ashes and threw some dried sticks into the small flame.

"How weak and weary I am to-night," he

thought. "What has become of the hunter's game? I could find none in the forest to-day." His head drooped forward and he fell asleep.

At sunrise he was aroused by a flood of light in the wigwam. He looked up and saw standing in the doorway a beautiful maiden, clad in a robe of sweet-grass and ferns. Her moccasins were made of velvet mosses, and the fairest blossoms were entwined in her long dark hair. She carried an armful of budding twigs.

"Who art thou?" cried the old man.

"I am the Spring Manito," she answered, merrily.

"Then thou wilt perish here," said the old man, "for alas! I have no cheer to offer thee!"

"Art thou the great Winter Manito?" asked the maiden.

"I am the great Winter Manito! Thou hast no doubt heard of my power. At my command the North Wind rushes madly through the forest and the giant trees bow before him as he twists and tears their branches."

"Cruel Manito," sighed the maiden, but the old man did not hear her.

"I cover the pine-trees with sleet and drive the birds southward. With my sceptre of ice I silence the brooks and rivers. My breath turns the dew into frost. I shake my locks and a face-cloth of snow covers the withered leaves and blossoms. Mighty is the Winter Manito!"

"Mighty is the Winter Manito," repeated the Maiden, sadly. "But my power is greater than his!"

"What meanest thou?" asked the old man quickly.

"At my call the soft breezes from the South caress the trees and heal the wounds the Winter Manito has made. My warm breath turns the frost into dew; my golden wand melts the frozen streams and their waters flow again toward the sea. I shake my tresses and the gentle rain falls; then the velvet buds burst forth and the birds hasten back to build their nests and to sing in the leafy branches. Where I walk in the fields and meadows the

grass and blossoms spring forth to greet me. The children of the red men rejoice in the beauty which I bring to gladden the earth. The Winter Manito is mighty but his is the power of cruelty; the Spring Manito is strong, and hers is the strength of kindness. The Winter Manito's sceptre is the biting frost; his rule brings pain and death; the Spring Manito bears the golden wand of sunshine and her hand-maidens bring joy and life."

As she spoke the maiden noticed that the old man grew weaker and weaker until he finally sank down on the floor of his lodge. A flood of sunshine filled the wigwam. The Winter Manito grew smaller and smaller until he disappeared. Then the old man's tent faded away and left the maiden standing under a tree. The sunshine had melted the snowdrifts, and a warm breeze was blowing.

The maiden stooped down and brushed away the dried leaves which had lain all winter under the snow. Then she enamelled the brown earth about her feet with star-like blossoms, pink and white, and shining green leaves.

"My precious Arbutus," she whispered, bending low, "thou art born to bring joy to the children of the red men and thou shalt trail after me through the pine-forest and over the distant hilltops."

She moved quickly through the woods and across the meadows. "Spring has come," whispered the trees and flowers. "Spring has come," sang the birds. Wherever she stepped the lovely Arbutus trailed after her on its delicate rosy vine and scented the air with sweetest fragrance.

THE FAIRY FLOWER *

HENRY WARD BEECHER

ONCE there was a little girl whose name was Clara. She had a very kind heart; but she was an only child and had been petted so much that she was becoming very selfish. Too late the mother lamented that she had indulged her child, and strove to repair the mischief by trying to make Clara think of other people's happiness, not solely of her own.

On some days, no one could be more charming than Clara. She was gentle and obliging. She sang all day long, and made every one who came near her happy. Then everybody admired her, and her mother and aunt were sure that she was cured of her pettish disposition. But the very next day all her charming ways were changed. She wore a moody face. She was no longer courteous, and every one

* By courtesy of The Ben. H. Sanborn Co.

who came near her felt the chill of her manner.

One summer's night, Clara went to her room. The moon was at its full, and was shining through the window so brightly that she needed no other light. Clara sat at the window feeling very unhappy. She was thinking over her conduct through the day, and was trying to imagine how it could be that on some days she was happy and on others so wretched.

As she mused, she laid her head back on the easy chair. No sooner had she shut her eyes than a strange thing happened. A feeble old man, carrying a basket, came into the room. In his basket, which he seemed hardly able to bear, were a handful of flowers and two great stones.

"My daughter," said the old man, "will you help me for I am too old to carry this load; please lighten it." Clara looked at him, pouting, and exclaimed, "Go away!"

"But I am weak and suffering," he said; "will you not lighten my load?" At last Clara took the flowers out of his basket.

They were very beautiful and she laid them in her lap.

"My daughter," said the old man, "you have not lightened my basket; you have taken only the pleasant things out of it, and have left the heavy stones. Please lift one of them out of the basket."

"Go away!" exclaimed Clara angrily. "I will not touch those dirty stones!"

No sooner had she said this than the old man began to change before her and to become so bright and white that he looked like a column of crystal. He took one of the stones and cast it out of the window, and it flew and flew, and fell on the eastern side of a grove where the sun shone first every morning.

Then the crystal old man took the flowers out of Clara's lap. They were wet with dew, and he shook them over her head and exclaimed, "Change into a flower! Go and stand by the stone till your shadow shall be marked upon it."

In a second, Clara was growing by the side of the wide, flat stone, and the moon cast upon it her shadow,—the shadow of a beautiful

flower with a long and slender stem. All night she was very wretched. In the morning, she could not help looking at herself in a brook which came close up to the stone; then she recognised the beautiful flower and knew that her name was now Columbine.

All day her shadow fell upon the stone, but when the sun went away, the shadow, too, went away. At night her faint shadow lay upon the stone but when the moon went away, her shadow, also, went away. And the stone lay still all day and all night, and did not care for the flower nor feel its shadow.

Clara longed to be a little girl again. She asked the stone to tell her how, but the hard stone would not answer. She asked the brook, but the brook whispered, "Ask the Bobolink!" She asked the Bobolink, but he merely alighted upon the flower and teetered up and down. She could not learn from the Bobolink how to make her shadow stay upon the stone.

Then she asked a spider and he spun a web from her bright blossoms, fastened it to the stone, bent her over, and tied her up, till she

feared she could never get loose. But all his nice films did her no good; her shadow would not stay upon the stone.

She asked the wind to help her. The wind swept away the spider's web, and blew so hard that the flower lay its whole length upon the stone; but when the wind left her and she rose up, there was no shadow marked upon the stone.

"What is beauty worth," thought Clara, "if it grows by the side of a stone that does not feel it, nor care for it?"

She asked the dew to help her. And the dew said, "How can I help you! I live contentedly in darkness, I put on my beauty only to please others. I let the sun come through my drops, though I know it will consume me."

"I wish I were dew," said Clara, "for then, I, too, could do some good. Now my beauty does no good, and I am wasting it every day upon a stone." When Clara breathed this kind wish, there were glad flutters and whispers all around.

The next day a beautiful child came that

way. She was gathering ferns, and mosses, and flowers. Whenever she saw a tuft of moss, she would ask, "Please, dear moss, may I take you?" And when she saw a beautiful branch with scarlet leaves, she would ask, "Dear bush, may I take these leaves?"

When she saw the beautiful columbine growing by the side of a stone, she asked, "Oh, sweet Columbine, may I pluck you?" And the fairy flower said, gently, "I must not go till my shadow is fastened upon the stone."

Then the girl took from her case a pencil and in a moment traced the shadow of the columbine upon the stone. When she had done this, she reached out her hand, took the stem low down, and broke it off.

At that moment Clara sprang up from her chair by the window, and there stood her mother saying, "My dear daughter, you should not fall asleep by an open window, not even in summer. How damp you are! Come, hasten to bed."

It was many days before Clara could persuade herself that she had only dreamed. It

was months before she told the dream to her mother. And when she told it, her mother said:

"Ah, Clara, would that all little girls might dream, if only it made them as good as your dream has made you."

THE SNOWDROP

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

A DEEP snow covered the ground for it was winter time. The air was cold and the sharp wind blew, but in one tiny house all was snug and warm. There under earth and snow in its bulb lay a little flower.

One day when the rain fell, little drops trickled through the snow coverlet down into the earth and told the flower bulb about the light above. And presently a sunbeam, pointed and slender, pierced its way through the ground and tapped on the little bulb.

"Come in," said the flower.

"I cannot," said the sunbeam. "I am not strong enough to lift the latch. I shall be stronger when spring comes."

"When will it be spring?" asked the flower.

Soon many other little sunbeams tapped on the door of the brown house and the flower asked each of them,

"When will it be spring?"

But the ground was covered with snow and every night there was ice on the water. Spring seemed so far away that the little flower sighed and said impatiently:

"How long it is! How long it is! I feel quite cribbed and cramped. I *must* stretch out a little. I *must* rise up; lift the latch and look out. Then I shall say merrily to the spring, 'Good morning!' "

Now the walls of the flower's house had been softened by the rain, warmed by the earth and snow and tapped upon by the sunbeams. So when the flower within pushed and pushed against the walls they gently gave way. Then up from under the earth shot the flower with a pale green bud on its tender stalk and long slender leaves that curled around it for a screen. The glittering snow was very cold but easier to push through than the solid brown earth.

"Welcome, welcome!" sang the evening sunbeam. "Welcome, sweet little blossom."

The flower lifted its head above the snow

into the world of light; the sunbeams cheered it with kisses until it unfolded itself white as the snow and decked with green stripes.

"Thou art a little too early," said the wind and the weather. "We still hold sway. It is entirely too cold for thee."

"Beautiful flower," sang the sunbeams, "how lovely thou art in thy white purity. Thou art the herald of Spring,—our first flower. Thy fair white bell shall ring the glad tidings of Spring over towns and fields. The snow shall melt, the bitter wind shall be driven away. Now earth shall send forth all her lovely blossoms and thou shalt have beautiful fellowship. Welcome!"

The words of the sunbeams gave deep delight to the flower. It bowed its head in gladness and humility. The weather was cold enough to freeze it to pieces—such a delicate little flower—but it was stronger than any one knew. It was strong in its glad faith in the spring and the message of the sunbeams. And so with patient hope it stood in its white dress in the white snow, bowing its head when

the snow flakes fell and courageously lifting it again when the sunbeams scattered the clouds.

"A snowdrop," shouted the children who came running into the garden. "There it stands so pretty, so beautiful—the first, the only one. It is spring's messenger.

"Spring's messenger," echoed from the keen morning air.

WHAT THE DANDELION TOLD

Clara Maetzel

Mother Earth and the little flower fairies had been very busy indeed getting ready for their great Spring opening. For weeks and weeks they had been preparing all the little flower children so that they would be ready to respond to the call of the robin and to the caresses of the sun and the soft west wind.

First of all, Snowdrop had been made ready because she was one of the very first to venture out into the world. And she and her many little sisters, very prim and neat in their white starched frocks, sat quite near the door. Sometimes Snowdrop would not wait for the robin and the sun to call her, but she would slip out quietly at the first warm shower. Nearby sat a whole row of happy Crocuses, gay and pretty in their bell-shaped dresses of white and purple and gold. Violets, nestling in their soft green coats, were

there, and "Daffy-down-dilly dressed in a green petticoat and a new gown" was quite ready to "come to town." Then there was dainty Spring Beauty and the proud and flaming Tulip and all the other dear, early flowers that make the world so beautiful after ice and snow are gone.

Yes,—every one was very busy and very happy,—every one,—except one poor, forlorn, little flower that sat, or rather lay, all alone in one corner. He did not look spick and span like the others, but his green coat hung about him quite wilted and soiled and his golden head drooped. He seemed very unhappy indeed.

"Come, come, Dandelion,—do tell us what has happened; you look quite crushed," exclaimed one of the fairies, stopping long enough in her task of mixing colours to notice the dejected little flower.

"Yes, Dandelion, do tell us," cried Crocus who was all ready to push his little flower face out into the open air and who was waiting for the first opportunity to do so.

"Dandelion will tell us what has happened,"

softly whispered Violet as she came closer to what was left of poor Dandelion.

"Well,—since all of you seem so interested I will tell you what happened. It certainly took all the conceit out of me,—I still feel weak and pale. You know that we Dandelions are bold and venturesome folks and some of us make our appearance in warm and sunny places long before any of the rest of you have the courage to come out. Indeed it has long been a matter of pride with us to have some person find us even before Snowdrop makes her appearance."

Snowdrop looked hurt at this, but said nothing and Dandelion continued:

"And so it happened that several of us slipped out and sprouted quietly and happily in Farmer Brown's front yard. It was such a nice place,—the sun shone brightly and coaxed us to put our best blossoms—they were so large and yellow that I am sure they must have looked almost as fine as Chrysanthemum."

Several of the flowers cast startled looks into the dark corner where the Chrysanthe-

mum brothers and sisters were sleeping. But their slumbers were so sound, since they would not wake until autumn, that they did not hear Dandelion's boastful remark.

"We made a beautiful spot of yellow on the lawn," continued Dandelion. "Well, yesterday Farmer and Mrs. Brown were out in the garden and they saw us.

" 'Oh, see the dandelions! How early they are this year. I shall have to call the children.' "

"With that Mrs. Brown went into the house to call her little boy and girl who came out and greeted us joyfully.

" 'Let me see, Jack, if you like butter,' said Ruth, as she held one of my blossoms under her brother's chin. It surely looked quite yellow by reflection and of course this was a sure sign that he liked butter.

" 'Come, Ruth, let's see if we can get enough stems to make a chain for you,' cried Jack, and they found enough of my hollow stems to make a chain to go around Ruth's little white throat.

"By this time I felt we were doing much

to make the children happy and I lifted my head proudly and whispered to my companions that surely we were useful as well as beautiful. Just then Mrs. Brown called the children into the house and we were left alone in the garden.

"But not for long—Alas! Farmer Brown who had gone away while the children were with us now returned with a strange, sharp and shining tool in his hand. He came straight to where we were growing so happily and said:

" 'Now we'll see whether this new weeding knife won't kill these pesky dandelions. Every year they spread more and more so that by and by there'll not be any grass. Perhaps by starting in early to weed them out we can get rid of the pests!' With that he dug the instrument deep into the ground and pulled up all my lovely little brothers and sisters. I alone remained, but even I was badly bruised as you can see, and I have come back to tell you how cruelly I have been treated. Wasn't it an unkind thing? I had always thought that people loved us,—for we

make the fields and meadows glow with the sun's own colour." And poor Dandelion drooped his golden head and was as sad as it is possible for a golden headed flower to be.

All the other flower children had looked very solemn and sympathetic during Dandelion's story and when he had finished, they crowded about him.

"It's just a shame," murmured Crocus; "I hope no one will treat me so rudely."

"Yes indeed," whispered Snowdrop, "it would certainly be a painful misfortune to have one's roots cut to pieces by a patent weeder," and she shuddered so violently that her stiff little petticoats fairly shook.

But Mother Earth and the fairies only smiled and said nothing, for they knew quite well that it would take many, many farmers and more weeders than they could ever hope to buy to get rid of Dandelion and his numerous brothers and sisters.

And the little fairy who was Dandelion's particular friend laid her tiny hand on his tousled golden head as she whispered,

"Never mind, Dandelion dear, you are the children's friend and companion and good old Mother Earth will never let you perish. She sends forth more of your kind than any other; she has made you so sturdy and strong that you can thrive almost anywhere—and I truly think that she loves you best."

We may shut our eyes
But we can't help knowing
That skies are blue,
And the grass is growing.

James Russell Lowell.

A GREAT FAMILY

AGNES MACLELLAN DAULTON

IT was a lovely day in May, and the Dandelion family that lived near the big gate were lifting their pretty golden heads to greet the sun. Here and there a grandfather or grandmother Dandelion stood crowned with silver, and, let us whisper it softly, one or two were quite bald, for a playful little breeze had sent their hair a-sailing, and he chuckled at his joke, the naughty breeze.

Now one grandmother stood upon a little knoll, and so was much taller than the rest. Indeed, she was the chief grandmother of the family, and much respected for her wisdom. And she was very handsome and stately, holding her graceful silver head high above the others.

"A story, a story," coaxed her grandchildren, turning their eager faces toward her. Some of them were tiny buds, but they all begged for a story.

"No, children, no," she replied, in a sweet, grandmotherly tone. "Really, my dears, you have had far more stories than are good for you, and I must not let you grow up uneducated. I think we will have a short lesson in family history."

The little Dandelions sighed.

"Now," she went on, "how many of you know why we are called Dandelions?"

And—will you believe it?—not one stupid little Dandelion could answer!

"That is just what I expected," said grandmother, sternly, eyeing them over her glasses. "My, my! this is very sad!"

Then one little Dandelion, prompted by his mother, said he supposed it had something to do with dandies, while another bright little thing lisped out that she guessed it was because they were as fierce as lions.

"No, no!" and grandmother shook her head so briskly a silver hair went flying.

"Look at your leaves," she said kindly, "and observe the edges. Learn to notice, florets; learn to notice."

"The edges are pointed like sharp teeth,

please, grandmother," half whispered one bashful little fellow.

"Exactly," said grandmother, proceeding learnedly; "our name is from the Latin, *dens leonis,* meaning lion's tooth, but our botanical name is Taraxacum."

"Oh, my!" sighed the little buds, for they didn't understand a word of it.

"Our roots have healing properties, and they are employed in making medicine, while our leaves are used in the spring for food; so we are useful as well as ornamental." And the grandmother beamed with pride.

"But, children, you must also know that we belong to the great and noble family of *Compositæ.*"

"Oh, dear!" gasped the little Dandelions.

"Now you know composite means made up of many parts; that is, each blossom is made up of many little florets. Study each other's heads and you will understand my meaning. Now in this great family of *Compositæ* there are many, many flowers besides the Dandelions. In fact, my children, we have over nine thousand relatives. Sunflowers, mari-

golds, asters, goldenrod, boneset, tansy, lettuce, and the daisy—all these belong to our family. Not only are we many, but we have the famous and the great among us—the thistle, royal flower of Scotland; the cornflower of Germany; the chrysanthemum, the emblem of brave little Japan—all these are composite flowers, our royal relatives."

The Dandelion family wildly applauded, and grandmother graciously bowed her acknowledgment.

"But, my children," she went on, "I would not have you forget we have also black sheep in the family—Spanish needles, ragweed, bitterweed, and beggar ticks; these, too, we must own, even though we bow our heads in shame. But so it is in all great families."

Just at this moment the gardener came whirring along with the lawn mower, and alas and alack, not a single Dandelion was left to tell the tale!

But the little winged seeds from grandmother's silver crown sailed away, carrying wisdom, I doubt not, to many another Dandelion family.

THE BIRTH OF THE VIOLET

A Legend

THE raindrops were kept busy one morning in the garden of the fairies. There were many flowers to be washed clean of the dust that had dulled their beautiful colours, and the green of the trees must be made bright once more; and to leave without a gambol with the little waves of the brook was not to be thought of. So the raindrops fell early in the morning, but in the afternoon the sky became clear and there was promise in the beautiful rainbow that the raindrops' work was done, for that day at least.

"Isn't our garden beautiful after a shower?" said one fairy to another sitting beside her.

"Yes, the dust covers the colours of the flowers almost as soon as we have painted them. But see the gold of those daffodils! I like the reds and blues of the other flowers, too. They seem brighter than ever to-day. Sometimes I sit all day and look at them."

"Oh! we have a rainbow this afternoon. It always looks to me like a great garden of flowers stretched in bands across the sky. I like to think that its yellow and red and blue are made up of flowers like these in our garden here."

"Do you see that colour next to the green? I love it; it is so dark and deep. Many times I have wished we might have a flower on earth just like it."

"Surely you, Fairy Artist, would have no trouble to make a colour like that; at least, it would do no harm for you to try."

The fairy artist sat with her eyes turned toward the rainbow until it had faded from sight, and long after the sun had sunk to rest, she sat alone under the trees, thinking.

One morning she called all the fairies to her. "Dear fairies," she said, "I am going to try to make a colour like that dark one in the rainbow. It may take me a long, long while, but one cannot give the children a greater joy than to add a new colour to the flowers on earth."

No one knew better than she that a great

task lay before her. Many days and weeks she tried. Sometimes the mixture was lighter than the colour in the rainbow, and sometimes it seemed too dark—never quite what she wished it to be.

Once, as she stood before the large bowl, mixing and stirring patiently—she stopped, and the fairies in the garden heard a shout of joy: "I have it! the beautiful colour! the beautiful colour!"

They hurried to the place where she always stood with her bowl and brush.

"See, it is the colour, indeed," they said; but, as they looked into the bowl, the beautiful colour began to fade, and soon it was not at all like the colour she had longed for.

"Ah, I see," said the artist fairy, sadly, "it is of no use to mix together these paints that I have been using. We must gather my material from all the colours of earth. My dear fairies, you must all help." Many were sent far and wide to bring from the earth clays of every colour they could find. The artist fairy worked on faithfully and patiently.

One day when she had worked harder and

longer than usual, she heard one say, "Surely, Artist Fairy, you do not mean to work all the evening? See, the sun is ready to sink."

"Just a little longer; I feel sure that the colour will come before sunset. Look, does it not begin even now to change?"

The fairies looked into the bowl and all exclaimed at once, "The colour at last! It is indeed the deep colour of the rainbow!"

"Let us carry the bowl to the top of the bank and at moonlight we will rejoice over the new joy that has come to us."

It was a small bank that overlooked a little brook. Flowers had never grown there and sometimes the fairies felt sad when they looked upon that bare spot in their garden. Perhaps the great tree that spread out its branches took more than its share of the sunshine, but the fairies loved this bank. Moonbeams always seemed to lie so still there. "It's just the place for our moonlight revel!" said one.

All the creatures of the fairies' garden came to the rejoicing. The night was glorious. The moon sent down her silvery beams earlier than usual, although the fireflies insisted that

there was no need of her shining so brightly, and that she might throw all her beams to the waves in the brook, for they looked so beautiful with a silver covering. Not a grasshopper went to bed, and the frog made the music for the dance, at which the cricket felt sad, for she knew her voice could not be heard above his. The flowers sang their sweetest songs about the new colour that was to come among them. It was not late when the fairies joined hands and danced around the bowl. Perhaps this moonlight revel would have lasted many hours longer, but as the fairies were finishing the dance, one of them touched the precious bowl and alas! the next moment they saw the beautiful colour flow in tiny dark streams down the hillside. For a little while it glistened beneath the rays of the moon, and then it sank into the dark earth. The fairies stood and watched it, helpless.

"It is all lost. It is all gone in a moment," said the Artist Fairy, as she turned for comfort to the rest.

"No, no, my dear Fairy. What you have once done you can do again."

"I do not remember how it was made. No, I cannot get it again. It is gone forever."

"Do not say that, I beg of you. Have you not heard it said that 'nothing is lost'?"

Once more the raindrops visited the garden, and the fairies worked all day long and all night long before everything was done.

"It is so refreshing when the garden has been washed clean again of its dust."

"See," cried one. "See our bank this morning."

"It is covered with a carpet of purple! Come, let us look closer," called another.

"It is the colour! It is the colour!" said the Artist Fairy, as she hastened toward the bank. "Nothing is lost," she added, softly as she looked closer. For purple violets had been born that morning while the raindrops fell.

God does not send us strange flowers every year.
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces.
The violet is here!

It all comes back; the odour, grace and hue;
Each sweet relation of its life repeated.
No blank is left, no looking-for is cheated:
It is the thing we knew.

A LYRIC OF JOY

BLISS CARMAN

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune,
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea;
A host in the sunshine, a snowdrift in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bob-o-links rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well,"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good."

AMONG THE TREE-TOPS

ROBIN'S CAROL*

This is the carol the Robin throws
  Over the edge of the valley;
Listen how boldly it flows,
  Sally on sally:

Tirra-lirra,
Early morn,
New born!
Day is near,
  Clear, clear.
Down the river
  All a-quiver,
Fish are breaking;
Time for waking.
Tup, tup, tup!
Do you know?
  All clear—
  Wake up!

Henry van Dyke.

*By special permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

HOW THE BIRDS CAME

An Indian Legend

"MANY years ago," says the old Indian Grandmother, "the Great Spirit visited the earth. As he walked over valley and hill he said, 'It is all beautiful and good. But the Great Spirit loves the trees best. See how they make the hills and valleys radiant with their green. Earth would be fairer still,' said the Great Spirit, 'if there were trees everywhere. I would have great forests cover the mountain sides. I would see trees as far as my eye can reach across the land. I would have a tree spring up wherever my foot touches the earth!' And it was as the Great Spirit wished. As he wandered up and down the mountains and valleys and across the plains, little trees sprang up in his footsteps, until the whole earth, like the hills and valleys, was radiant in green. 'The Great Spirit loves the little trees best,' he said, when he looked upon

them. 'Little trees, I will watch over you and guard you. I will send gentle rains that you may have water to drink. I will send my warm sun to shine upon you. And you must grow and grow and grow.' All summer long the Great Spirit cared for them, and when the first summer had passed and the winter came, the little trees had grown until they spread their branches far and wide.

"But one autumn day a great change came over the radiant green. All the leaves on the trees turned to beautiful colours—red, yellow, brown, gold. 'They are beautiful, beautiful,' said the Great Spirit. 'My trees have never been so beautiful before.'

"As he spoke a gentle wind stirred the branches and the Great Spirit saw the leaves drop from the trees, flutter through the air and fall to the ground.

" 'See,' he exclaimed, 'the leaves of my trees fall to the earth where they will wither and die. This shall not be. Behold, my leaves, I am the Great Spirit. I will give you breath and strength. You shall not die—you shall live forever.'

"He breathed softly upon the coloured leaves. In a moment hundreds of leaves moved, then fluttered, then flew away—a flock of beautiful birds. The red-brown oak leaves became robins; all the yellow and gold leaves became yellow birds. The red-maple leaves flew away beautiful red birds, while the withered brown leaves scattered around, sprang up sparrows and larks."

The Indian Grandmother says that is how we got our first birds, and that is why the birds love the trees and always live among them.

HOW THE BIRDS LEARNED TO BUILD NESTS *

JAMES BALDWIN

THERE is an old story which says that the magpie was the first bird to build a nest.

One day all the birds came to her and said, "Mrs. Magpie, won't you teach us how to make pretty nests like your own?"

"Oh, yes," said the magpie, kindly. "I will show you just how it is done." Then she told them to sit around her, and she would build a nest while they were looking on. She said, "You have only to notice what I do."

She brought some mud from the side of the brook and made it into a kind of round cake. The birds sat very still, and watched her until the cake was finished. Then the thrush cried out, "Oh, I see how the nest is built! You first make a cake of mud and then pat it

* From "School Reading by Grades, Third Year," by James Baldwin. Copyright American Book Co.

down in the middle." And she flew away to try for herself; and no thrush has learned anything about nest-building since.

The magpie next took some twigs, and laid them round the cake of mud. "Say no more!" cried the blackbird. "I understand it all." Away he flew to the green thickets by the river; and that is how blackbirds build their nests to this very day.

Then the magpie put a thin layer of mud on the twigs, and smoothed it a little with her beak. "Oh, that is all that I need to know," said the wise owl. "Who—who—who would have thought it so simple a thing?" He flew to the top of a great oak tree, where he sat for a long time, looking at the moon and saying, "Who—who—who!"

Then the magpie took some long, slender twigs, and twined them round the outside. "That is just the thing!" cried the song sparrow, and off he went. And song sparrows still make their nests by twining twigs.

After this, the magpie took some feathers and fine moss, and lined the nest until it was a very comfortable place indeed.

"That suits me!" said the starling, and off he flew. And everybody knows that starlings have built well-lined nests ever since.

The magpie kept on working and working. But every bird, when he had learned a little about nest-building, flew away without waiting to the end of the lesson. At last no one was left but the turtledove. It had paid no attention to what the magpie was doing, and so had not learned anything at all.

It sat on a branch above the magpie's nest, and kept saying over and over again, "Take two, two, two, two!" But it was looking far away toward the blue mountains in the west, and its thoughts were all with its dear mate whom a cruel hawk had lately snatched away.

"Take two, two, two, two," mourned the dove. The magpie heard this just as she was twining a slender twig around the top of her nest. So, without looking up, she said, "One will be enough."

But the dove kept on saying, "Take two, two, two, two." This made the magpie angry, and she said, "Don't I tell you that one will be enough?"

"Take two, two, two, two!" still cried the turtledove. At last the magpie looked up and saw that no bird was near her but the silly dove.

"I'll never give another lesson in nest building!" she cried. And she flew away and left the dove alone in the tree.

It was no use, after that, for any bird to ask the magpie how to make a nest; and, from that day to this, no bird has learned anything new about its trade.

All the blackbirds, the thrushes, the owls, and the doves, still build just as they did a thousand years ago. None of them seem to want better nests; and I doubt if any could learn how to make them now, even though the magpie should try to teach them again.

OUT OF THE NEST*

MAUD LINDSAY

ONCE upon a time a mother bird and father bird built a nest in a tree. It was made of straw and leaves and all sorts of wonderful things, and even had lace trimmings on it.

Soon after the nest was finished, the mother bird put two eggs in it, and then she and the father bird thought of nothing but keeping those eggs safe and warm. Mother bird sat on them day and night; and even when father bird would say, "You really must fly about a little and let me take care of the eggs," she did not like to leave them.

After a while two little birds came out of the shells, which was just what she had been hoping for all the time. The baby birds were both so weak and small that they could do nothing at all for themselves but open their mouths very wide and call, "Peep, peep!

* Courtesy of Milton Bradly Co. From "More Mother Stories."

mother, dear, peep!" Mother bird and father bird were busy all day getting them something to eat. By and by they began to grow, and then they had soft feather clothes to wear, which are the best clothes in the world for baby birds.

Mother bird said to them one day, "You are almost ready to learn to fly"; and then they felt very large. That same day mother bird and father bird flew away together to get something for dinner; and while they were gone the little birds heard a very queer noise which seemed to come from a pond near the tree. This is the way it sounded: "Kerchunk! Kerchunk!"

"Oh! what can it be?" said the sister bird. "I'll peep over the side of the nest and see," said her brother. But when he put his head out he could see nothing although he heard the sound very plainly: "Kerchunk! Kerchunk!" Then he leaned out a little farther and a little farther, till his head was dizzy. "Peep, peep! You'll fall!" cried the sister bird; and, sure enough, she had scarcely said it before he tumbled out of the nest, down,

down to the ground! He was not hurt, but, oh, how frightened he was! "Peep, peep! mother, dear, peep!" he cried. "Peep!" cried the sister bird up in the nest, but the mother and father were too far away to hear their calls.

The brother bird hopped about on the ground and looked around him. He was near the pond now, and the sound was very loud: "Kerchunk! Kerchunk!" "Peep, peep, peep!" called the birdie, and in a moment up hopped a big frog. This was an old schoolteacher frog, and he had been teaching all the little frogs to sing. "Kerchunk! Kerchunk!" said he. "How can I teach my frogs to sing when you are making such a noise?"

"Peep, peep! I want my mamma," said the baby bird. Then the frog saw how young the birdie was, and he was very sorry for him. "Come with me," he said, "and I will teach you to sing." But the baby bird cried louder than ever at this, and a mother dove, who was singing her babies to sleep in a neighbouring tree, flew down to see what could be the matter.

"I can't begin to get my children to sleep in all this fuss," she said to the frog, but when she saw the little bird she was just as sorry as the frog had been. "Poor, dear baby," she cried. "I will fly right off and find your mamma for you." So she told her children to be good and quiet, and then away she flew. Before long she met the father and mother, and they all came back in a great hurry. Then they tried to get the baby bird into the nest again.

"He is entirely too young to be out of the nest," cried his mother, "and he must get in again at once." "Spread your wings and fly, as I do," said the father bird. So the baby bird spread his wings and tried to fly; but, try as he would, he could not reach the nest in the tree.

"Put him into my school, and I will teach him to swim," said the frog; "that is better than flying, and a great deal easier to learn, I am sure." This was so kind of the frog that the mother bird thanked him; but she said she had to be very careful with her children, and that she was afraid the water might give the

little bird a cold. While they were talking, they heard somebody coming along, whistling the jolliest tune!

"Dear me! Dear me!" cried the birds. "There comes a boy!" "He's apt to have stones in his pocket," said the frog. "He will carry my darling off and put him in a cage! Oh, fly! fly!" begged the mother bird. But before the baby bird even had time to say, "Peep!" the boy came in sight.

Then the father bird flew over the boy's head and the mother bird down in front of him. The frog croaked and the dove cooed, but none of them could hide the little bird from him. "If you hurt him, I'll peck your eyes out!" cried the poor mother, who hardly knew what she was saying; but the boy picked the little bird up, just as if he did not hear her. "Oh, what shall I do?" cried the mother bird.

Then the boy looked at her and at the tree where the nest was. "Coo, coo, coo! I think I know what he is going to do," said the dove. "There's no telling," croaked the frog; and they all watched and wondered, while the boy

put the bird in his pocket and began to climb the tree. He swung himself from branch to branch, climbing higher all the time, until at last he reached the pretty nest where the sister bird waited for her mother to come home.

Mother bird and father bird flew to the top of the tree to watch the boy. "Suppose he should take her, too," said the mother bird. But what do you think he did? Yes, indeed. He put the brother bird back in the nest, as well as the mother bird could have done it herself.

"Thank you! Thank you!" sang the mother and father as the boy scrambled down again. "Peep, peep! Thank you!" called the little birds from the nest. "Coo, coo! I knew," cried the dove. "Kerchunk! Kerchunk! I should like to have him in my school," said the frog, as he hopped away to his pond.

THE STORY OF BLUE-WINGS

MARY STEWART

THERE was once an old apple-orchard. It was full of beautiful things. In the spring the trees were covered with pink and white blossoms, while the soft green grass was sprinkled with dandelions. In the autumn the fruit was scarlet, and beneath the trees the grass, which had grown high and feathery, waved in the wind.

But there was something else in the orchard which was more wonderful than the grass or the dandelions, the blossoms or the fruit. Sometimes early in the spring there was a sudden flash of blue wings above the trees, then a bird's song, so clear and sweet and joyous that it made us think of blue skies and of dancing blue waves. It came from the owner of those splendid blue wings, and we knew that the king of the orchard had returned from his winter's trip, the bluebird had come home.

High up in an old tree there was a little hole and there the bluebird made his nest. From the outside the hole looked dark and hard, but inside it was as soft and cosy as the prettiest nest in the world. It was lined with bits of feathers and down and it was quite big, plenty big enough for the bluebird and his wife. Her feathers were not as bright as his nor her song as beautiful, but she could do something even more marvellous than wearing bright feathers or singing joyous songs. She could lay eggs.

And so she laid five small, bluish eggs in that cosy home. Then she sat on them, keeping them warm with her soft little body, while the father bird flashed his splendid wings back and forth through the orchard, bringing food to the little mother bird and singing his happy song, happier than ever now that he could tell of those precious eggs.

At last the shells went "crack," and five little baby birds opened their big bills very wide and chirped for food. Then how busy their father and mother were kept!

I have not time to tell you all that happened

during the summer, when the young ones learned to fly, learned too a few notes of that song which makes us think of the sky and the sea. None of them were as beautiful as their father, none of their songs were as perfect, but their mother told them to have patience, to try hard to fly straight, and to sing clearly, and then, perhaps, after their winter in the warm South, they would come back to the orchard with wings that would flash, and with a song that would be like the first joyous call of the spring time.

And so, when the first cold weather came, four of the young birds flew away with their mother and father. But one was left behind! Poor little bird, I do not know whether he had fallen from a tree or been hit by a stone. I only know that one wing was broken, and he lay on the hard ground, his blue feathers dull, his eyes dim.

There a little girl found him, and she lifted him tenderly and carried him through the orchard to the white farm house beyond. She laid the poor little creature in a big wooden

cage, and fed him with bread crumbs soaked in water until his eyes grew brighter and he tried to lift his wings. But when he found that he could not, because one was broken, you know, he gave a chirp of pain and huddled down forlornly on the floor of the cage. But soon, with all this care, he grew strong again, even if he could not fly, and he and the little girl had nice times together. The door of the cage was always open and Blue-wings, that is the name the child gave him, although his feathers were not so very blue, would hop down to the table and around the room, always ending by lighting on the little girl's shoulder. He would eat from her hand, and sometimes he gave little chirps which meant "thank you."

He had never sung since the day when he had tried to raise his wings and had dropped them in pain. Sometimes he dreamed of the orchard, of flying swiftly through the trees and of singing joyous songs to greet the sunshine. Then he would open his eyes and see the cosy kitchen and his dear little girl friend, and he

would hop down sadly and sit on her shoulder, trying to forget his longings, trying to chirp cheerfully when she gave him crumbs.

As the winter passed and the days grew warm and bright, Blue-wings found himself dreaming of his old free life most of the time, and between the dreams the longing to fly and sing was stronger than ever. One day the window next his cage was left wide open and through it the soft south wind brought the fragrance of the apple blossoms, and the whir and hum of the little creatures who were busy greeting the spring time. Suddenly Blue-wings felt as if he must fly and sing or his heart would break. And then—was it a dream, he wondered—he lifted his wings and flew right out of the window. Through the orchard he darted, above the blossoming trees, his blue wings flashing in the sunshine. Even his father's wings were not as splendidly blue as his, and they were so strong!

It was no dream now, he knew; it was all true. And as he mounted higher and higher he sang a song so clear and sweet and joyful that the farmer ploughing in the field stopped,

and listened with tears in his eyes. Blue-wing's song made him think of the tossing sea he had lived beside when he was a boy. And the little girl heard it, as she stood at the farm-house door, and she stood smiling up into the blue sky with thoughts of angels in her heart.

"Did Blue-wings ever come back to the little girl," you ask? He never came back to the cage or the farm-house kitchen, but he lived in the orchard and had a nest there. And whenever the child saw a wonderfully blue glimmer through the branches, or heard a most beautiful bird's song, she knew that Blue-wings was near. And she remembered that it was through her love and her care that he had lived and grown strong, able to take his place as king of the orchard, able by his song to bring into people's hearts happiness too great for words.

AN EASTERN LEGEND

GRACE DUFFIELD GOODWIN

There's a tender eastern legend,
In a volume old and rare
Of the Christ Child in his garden,
Walking with the children there.

And it tells—this strange, sweet story—
(True or false, ah, who shall say?)
How a bird with broken pinion
Dead within the garden lay.

And the children, children cruel,
Lifted it by shattered wing,
Shouting, "Make us merry music,
Sing, you lazy fellow, sing."

But the Christ Child bent above it,
Took it in his gentle hand,
Full of pity for the suffering
He alone could understand.

Whispered to it—oh, so softly!
Laid his lips upon its throat,
And the song life, swift returning,
Sounded out in one glad note.

Then away, on wings unwearied,
Joyously it sang and soared,
And the little children kneeling
Called the Christ Child, "Master-Lord!"

THE HOUSE WREN

NELTJE BLANCHAN

WHEN you are sound asleep some April morning, a tiny brown bird, just returned from a long visit south, will probably alight on the perch in front of one of your boxes, peep in the doorhole, enter—although his pert little cocked-up tail has to be lowered to let him through—look about with approval, go out, spring to the roof and pour out of his wee throat a gushing torrent of music. The song seems to bubble up faster than he can sing. After the wren's happy discovery of a place to live, his song will go off in a series of musical explosions all day long, now from the roof, now from the clothes posts, the fence, the barn, or the woodpile. There never was a more tireless, spirited, brilliant singer. From the intensity of his feelings, he sometimes droops that expressive little tail of his, which is usually so erect and saucy.

With characteristic energy, he frequently begins to carry twigs into the house before he finds a mate. The day little Jenny Wren appears on the scene, how he does sing! Dashing off for more twigs, but stopping to sing to her every other minute, he helps furnish the cottage quickly, but, of course, he overdoes—he carries in more twigs and hay and feathers than the little house can hold, then pulls half of them out again. Jenny gathers, too, for she is a bustling housewife and arranges matters with neatness and despatch. Neither vermin nor dust will she tolerate within her well-kept home. Everything she does to suit herself pleases her ardent little lover. He applauds her with song; he flies about after her with a nervous desire to protect; he seems beside himself with happiness. Let any one pass too near his best beloved, and he begins to chatter excitedly: *"Chit-chit-chit-chit,"* as much as to say, "Oh, do go away; go quickly! Can't you see how nervous and fidgety you make me?"

If you fancy that Jenny Wren, who is patiently sitting on the little pinkish, chocolate

spotted eggs in the centre of her feather bed, is a demure, angelic creature, you have never seen her attack the sparrow, nearly twice her size, that dares put his impudent head inside her door. Oh! how she flies at him! How she chatters and scolds! What a plucky little shrew she is, after all! Her piercing, chattering, scolding notes are fairly hissed into his ears until he is thankful enough to escape.

There's a little brown wren that has built in our tree,*
And she's scarcely as big as a big humble-bee;
She has hollowed a house in the heart of a limb,
And made the walls tidy and made the doors trim
With the down of the crow's foot, and tow, and with straw
The cosiest dwelling that you ever saw.

The little brown wren has the brightest of eyes
And a foot of very diminutive size.
Her tail is as big as the sail of a ship.
She's demure, though she walks with a hop and a skip;
And her voice—but a flute were more fit than a pen
To tell of the voice of the little brown wren.

One morning Sir Sparrow came sauntering by
And cast on the wren's house an envious eye;

* "The Little Brown Wren," by Clinton Scollard.

With a strut of bravado and toss of his head,
"I'll put in my claim here," the bold fellow said;
So straightway he mounted on impudent wing,
And entered the door without pausing to ring.

An instant—, and swiftly that feathery knight
All towsled and tumbled, in terror took flight,
While there by the door, in her favourite perch,
As neat as a lady just starting for church,
With this song on her lips, "He will not call again
Unless he is asked," sat the little brown wren.

If the bluebirds had her courage and hot, quick temper, they would never let the sparrows drive them away from their boxes. Unfortunately a hole large enough to admit a bluebird will easily admit those grasping monopolists; but Jenny Wren is safe, if she did but know it, in her house with its tiny front door. It is amusing to see a sparrow try to work his shoulders through the small hole of an empty wren house, pushing and kicking madly, but all in vain.

What rent do the wrens pay for their little houses? No man is clever enough to estimate the vast numbers of insects on your place that they destroy. They eat nothing else, which is the chief reason why they are so lively and

excitable. Unable to soar after flying insects because of their short, round wings, they keep, as a rule, rather close to the ground which their finely barred brown feathers so closely match. Whether hunting for grubs in the wood-pile, scrambling over the brush heap after spiders, searching among the trees to provide a dinner for their large families, or creeping, like little feathered mice, in queer nooks and crannies among the outbuildings on the farm, they are always busy in your interest which is also theirs. It certainly pays, in every sense, to encourage the wrens.

THE CHILDREN OF WIND AND THE CLAN OF PEACE

A CHRIST LEGEND

FIONA MACLEOD

IT was the last month of the last year of the seven years' silence and peace. When would that be, you ask?

Surely what other would it be than the seven holy years when Jesus the Christ was a little lad.

It was a still day. The little white flowers that were called Breaths of Hope and that we now call Stars of Bethlehem were so hushed in quiet that the shadows of the moths lay on them like the dark motionless violet in the hearts of pansies. In the long swords of tender grass the multitude of the daisies were white as milk faintly stained with flusht dews fallen from roses. On the meadows of white poppies were long shadows blue as the blue lagoons of the sky among drifting snow white moors of cloud. Three white aspens on the

pastures were in a still sleep; their tremulous leaves made no rustle; ewes and lambs were sleeping and yearling kids opened and closed their eyes among the garths of white clover.

It was Sabbath and Jesus walked alone. When He came to a little rise in the grass He turned and looked back at the house where His parents dwelled. Suddenly He heard a noise as of many birds and turned and looked beyond the low upland where He stood. A pool of pure water lay in the hollow, fed by a ceaseless wellspring and round it and over it circled birds whose breasts were grey as pearl and whose necks shone purple and grass green and rose. The noise was of their wings, for though the birds were beautiful they were voiceless and dumb as flowers.

At the edge of the pool stood two figures like angels, but the child did not know them. One He saw was beautiful as Night, and one beautiful as Morning.

He drew near.

"I have lived seven years," He said, "and I wish to send peace to the far ends of the world."

"Tell your secret to the birds," said one.

"Tell your secret to the birds," said the other.

So Jesus called the birds.

"Come," He cried, and they came.

Seven came flying from the left, from the side of the angel beautiful as Night. Seven came flying from the right, from the side of the angel beautiful as Morning.

To the first He said: "Look into my heart."

But they wheeled about Him, and with new found voices mocked, crying, "How could we see into your heart that is hidden . . . " and mocked and derided, crying, "What is Peace! . . . leave us alone. Leave us alone."

So Christ said to them: "I know you for the birds of Evil. Henceforth ye shall be black as night, and be children of the winds."

To the seven other birds which circled about Him, voiceless, and brushing their wings against His arms, He cried:

"Look into my heart."

And they swerved and hung before Him in a maze of wings, and looked into His pure heart: and, as they looked, a soft murmurous

sound came from them—drowsy, sweet, full of peace—and as they hung there like a breath in frost they became white as snow.

"Ye are the Doves of the Spirit," said Christ, "and to you I will commit that which ye have seen. Henceforth shall your plumage be white and your voices be the voices of peace."

The young Christ turned, for He heard Mary calling to the sheep and goats, and knew that dayset was come and that in the valleys the gloaming was already rising like smoke from the urns of the twilight. When he looked back he saw that seven white doves were in the cedar beyond the pool, cooing in low ecstasy of peace and awaiting through sleep and dreams the rose-red pathways of the dawn. Down the long grey reaches of the ebbing day He saw seven birds rising and falling on the wind black as black water in caves, black as the darkness of night in old pathless woods.

And that is how the first doves became white, and how the first crows became black and were called by a name that means the clan of darkness, the children of wind.

IN MEADOW AND POND

A SPRING LILT

Through the silver mist
  Of the blossom-spray
Trill the orioles: list
  To their joyous lay!

"What in all the world
  In all the world," they say,
"Is half so sweet, so sweet,
  Is half so sweet as May?"

"June! June! June!"
  Low croon
The brown bees in the clover.
  "Sweet! sweet! sweet!"
    Repeat
The robins, nestled over.

Unknown.

HOW BUTTERFLIES CAME

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

ONE day the flowers begged the fairies to let them leave their stalks and fly away into the air.

"We have to sit here in the same place from morning till night, fairies! Do let us go!"

"Go then, dear flowers," said the fairies. "But you must promise that you will return to your stalks before the sun goes down."

"We promise," called out the flowers as they flew away, red, yellow, and white, over the grass, out of the garden to the great wide meadow beyond. The fairies' garden seemed, suddenly, to have taken wings.

As the sun began to set the flowers flew quietly back to their stalks, and when the fairies came, they found each flower again in its place.

"Well done, well done!" exclaimed the fair-

ies. "To-morrow you may fly away again to the meadows."

As the sun rose the next morning there was a flutter of red and yellow and white as, from every stalk, a pair of coloured wings rose and flapped, then took flight once more over the meadows and fields. And by and by a day came when the petals of the flowers became wings—*real* wings, for the flowers themselves had become beautiful butterflies—red, yellow and white.

WHITE BUTTERFLIES

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail, pale wings for the wind to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see,
Fly.

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh;
All to the haven where each should be,
Fly.

THE BUTTERFLY

MRS. ALFRED GATTY

"LET me hire you as a nurse for my poor children," said a Butterfly to a quiet Caterpillar, who was strolling along a cabbage-leaf in her odd lumbering way. "See these little eggs," continued the Butterfly; "I don't know how long it will be before they come to life, and I feel very sick and poorly, and if I should die, who will take care of my baby butterflies when I am gone? Will *you,* kind, mild, green Caterpillar? But you must mind what you give them to eat, Caterpillar! —they cannot, of course, live on *your* rough food. You must give them early dew, and honey from the flowers; and you must let them fly about only a little way at first; for, of course, one can't expect them to use their wings properly all at once. Dear me, it is a sad pity you cannot fly yourself! But I

have no time to look for another nurse now, so you will do your best, I hope. Dear, dear! I cannot think what made me come and lay my eggs on a cabbage-leaf! What a place for young butterflies to be born upon! Still you will be kind, will you not, to the poor little ones? Here, take this gold-dust from my wings as a reward. Oh, how dizzy I am! Caterpillar, you will remember about the food—"

And with these words the Butterfly drooped her wings and was gone; and the green Caterpillar, who had not had the opportunity of even saying Yes or No to the request, was left standing alone by the side of the Butterfly's eggs.

"A pretty nurse she has chosen, indeed, poor lady!" exclaimed she, "and a pretty business I have in hand! Why, her senses must have left her, or she never would have asked a poor crawling creature like me to bring up her dainty little ones! Much they'll mind me, truly, when they feel the gay wings on their backs, and can fly away out of my sight whenever they choose! Ah! how silly some people

are, in spite of their painted clothes and the gold-dust on their wings!"

However, the poor Butterfly was gone, and there lay the eggs on the cabbage-leaf; and the green Caterpillar had a kind heart, so she resolved to do her best. But she got no sleep that night, she was so very anxious. She made her back quite ache with walking all night round her young charges, for fear any harm should happen to them; and in the morning says she to herself—

"Two heads are better than one. I will consult some wise animal upon the matter, and get advice. How should a poor crawling creature like me know what to do without asking my betters?"

But still there was difficulty—whom should the Caterpillar consult? There was the shaggy Dog who sometimes came into the garden. But he was so rough!—he would most likely whisk all the eggs off the cabbage-leaf with one brush of his tail, if she called him near to talk to her, and then she should never forgive herself. There was the Tom Cat, to be sure, who would sometimes sit at the foot

of the apple-tree, basking himself and warming his fur in the sunshine; but he was so selfish and indifferent!—there was no hope of his giving himself the trouble to think about butterflies' eggs. "I wonder which is the wisest of all the animals I know," sighed the Caterpillar, in great distress; and then she thought, and thought, till at last she thought of the Lark; and she fancied that because he went up so high, and nobody knew where he went to, he must be very clever, and know a great deal; for to go up very high (which she could never do) was the Caterpillar's idea of perfect glory.

Now in the neighbouring corn-field there lived a Lark, and the Caterpillar sent a message to him, to beg him to come and talk to her, and when he came she told him all her difficulties, and asked him what she was to do to feed and rear the little creatures so different from herself.

"Perhaps you will be able to inquire and hear something about it the next time you go up high," observed the Caterpillar, timidly.

The Lark said, "Perhaps he should;" but he did not satisfy her curiosity any further. Soon afterwards, however, he went singing upwards into the bright blue sky. By degrees his voice died away in the distance till the green Caterpillar could not hear a sound. It is nothing to say she could not see him, for, poor thing, she never could see far at any time, and had a difficulty in looking upwards at all, even when she reared herself up most carefully, which she did now; but it was of no use, so she dropped upon her legs again, and resumed her walk round the Butterfly's eggs, nibbling a bit of the cabbage-leaf now and then as she moved along.

"What a time the Lark has been gone!" she cried, at last. "I wonder where he is just now! I would give all my legs to know! He must have flown up higher than usual this time, I do think! How I should like to know where it is that he goes to, and what he hears in that curious blue sky! He always sings going up and coming down, but he never lets any secret out. He is very close!"

And the green Caterpillar took another turn round the Butterfly's eggs.

At last the Lark's voice began to be heard again. The Caterpillar almost jumped for joy, and it was not long before she saw her friend descend with hushed note to the cabbage bed.

"News, news, glorious news, friend Caterpillar!" sang the Lark; "but the worst of it is, you won't believe me!"

"I believe everything I am told," observed the Caterpillar, hastily.

"Well, then, first of all, I will tell you what these little creatures are to eat"—and the Lark nodded his beak towards the eggs. "What do you think it is to be? Guess!"

"Dew, and the honey out of flowers, I am afraid," sighed the Caterpillar.

"No such thing! Something simpler than that. Something *you* can get at quite easily."

"I can get at nothing quite easily but the cabbage-leaves," murmured the Caterpillar, in distress.

"Excellent! my good friend," cried the

Lark, exultingly; "you have found it out. You are to feed them with cabbage-leaves."

"Never!" cried the Caterpillar, indignantly. "It was their mother's last request that I should do no such thing."

"Their mother knew nothing about the matter," persisted the Lark; "but why do you ask me, and then disbelieve what I say? You have neither faith nor trust."

"Oh, I believe everything I am told," said the Caterpillar.

"Nay, but you do not," replied the Lark; "you won't believe me even about the food, and yet that is but a beginning of what I have to tell you. Why, Caterpillar, what do you think those little eggs will turn out to be?"

"Butterflies, to be sure," said the Caterpillar.

"Caterpillars!" sang the Lark; "and you'll find it out in time;" and the Lark flew away, for he did not want to stay and contest the point with his friend.

"I thought the Lark had been wise and kind," observed the mild green Caterpillar,

once more beginning to walk round the eggs, "but I find that he is foolish and saucy instead. Perhaps he went up *too* high this time. Ah, it's a pity when people who soar so high are silly and rude nevertheless! Dear! I still wonder whom he sees, and what he does up yonder."

"I would tell you if you would believe me," sang the Lark, descending once more.

"I believe everything I am told," reiterated the Caterpillar, with as grave a face as if it were a fact.

"Then I'll tell you something else," cried the Lark; "for the best of my news remains behind. *You will one day be a Butterfly yourself.*"

"Wretched bird!" exclaimed the Caterpillar, "you jest with my inferiority—now you are cruel as well as foolish. Go away! I will ask your advice no more."

"I told you you would not believe me," cried the Lark.

"I believe everything that I am told," persisted the Caterpillar; "that is"—and she hesitated—"everything that is *reasonable* to be-

lieve. But to tell me that butterflies' eggs are caterpillars, and that caterpillars leave off crawling and get wings, and become butterflies!—Lark! you are too wise to believe such nonsense yourself, for you know it is impossible."

"I know no such thing," said the Lark, warmly. "Whether I hover over the cornfields of earth, or go up into the depths of the sky, I see so many wonderful things, I know no reason why there should not be more. Oh, Caterpillar! it is because you crawl, because you never get beyond your cabbage-leaf, that you call *any* thing *impossible.*"

"Nonsense!" shouted the Caterpillar, "I know what's possible, and what's not possible, according to my experience and capacity, as well as you do. Look at my long green body and these endless legs, and then talk to me about having wings and a painted feathery coat."

"You would-be-wise Caterpillar!" cried the indignant Lark. "Do you not hear how my song swells with rejoicing as I soar upwards to the mysterious wonder-world above? Oh,

Caterpillar; what comes to you from thence, receive, as I do, upon trust."

"That is what you call—"

"Faith," interrupted the Lark.

"How am I to learn Faith?" asked the Caterpillar.

At that moment she felt something at her side. She looked round—eight or ten little green caterpillars were moving about, and had already made a show of a hole in the cabbage-leaf. They had broken from the Butterfly's eggs!

Shame and amazement filled our green friend's heart, but joy soon followed; for, as the first wonder was possible, the second might be so too. "Teach me your lesson, Lark!" she would say; and the Lark sang to her of the wonders of the earth below and of the heaven above. And the Caterpillar talked all the rest of her life to her relations of the time when she should be a Butterfly.

But none of them believed her. She nevertheless had learnt the Lark's lesson of faith, and when she was going into her chrysalis, she said—

"I shall be a Butterfly some day!"

But her relations thought her head was wandering, and they said, "Poor thing!"

And when she was a Butterfly, and was going to die again, she said—

"I have known many wonders—I have faith —I can trust even now for what shall come next!"

THE WIND, A HELPER

MARY STEWART

A LITTLE girl was once standing in a dark, narrow street playing with some bits of coloured paper she had found in an ash-can. Suddenly a gust of wind came around the street-corner. It blew the coloured scraps right out of the child's hand and carried them up over her head, then higher still, over the house-tops, until they were out of sight.

Janie, that was the little girl's name, watched them fly away, with tears in her eyes. Her busy mother had given her this day for a holiday, she had no toys to play with, and she loved those gay bits of paper. As she looked after the scraps up into the little patch of blue sky, which was all she could see between the high houses, she saw a small, white cloud scudding along, just the way the papers had flown.

"What makes the cloud fly so fast?" thought Janie, and as if in answer another gust of

wind came blowing down the street. "Oh, wind, blow me, too," cried Janie, "take me up in the sky with the cloud," and she held out her little petticoat.

The wind filled it and blew her—well, it didn't quite blow her into the sky, but it did a kinder thing. It blew her down the dark, narrow street, through other streets, each getting wider and cleaner, until at last it blew her right into the country. There she found herself racing over green fields, with the sky overhead so big and so blue that the clouds looked like a flock of little sheep. There for a moment the wind left her—he had other things to do—and Janie stood looking around her happy and surprised. It was a spring day and the grass, which was waving in the wind, was soft and green and full of buttercups and daisies. "Far prettier than my scraps of paper," thought Janie. The trees were covered with new, green leaves, some of them were dressed in pink and white blossoms, and their branches swayed in the wind as if they were waving a welcome to the little girl. But she didn't have long to stand and look. Back

came the wind, bringing new scents of blossoms and other sweet spring things with him, and off the child ran again.

Presently she saw in front of her a shining blue line, and when she reached it she found it was the sea. If any one of us has ever seen the sea on a clear windy day we can never forget it, and that is just the way Janie felt. The waves were high and blue, but they wore great white caps which broke against the wind, and he scattered them into splendid foamy bits of spray, while the waves came dashing over the beach.

It was all so beautiful that Janie took a long, deep breath of wind, and suddenly her cheeks grew pink and her eyes bright, and you never would have known she was the pale, sad little Janie who stood in the dark street watching her scraps of paper blow away.

She was standing on the beach gazing out to sea in astonishment. For there, on the blue water, was something which looked like a great bird with its wings outspread, only it was far bigger than any bird, and as it skimmed over the water she saw men moving

upon it. Can you guess what it was? It was a splendid ship; but as Janie had never seen one before, except in pictures, she was much puzzled. "What makes it fly so fast?" she wondered, and for an answer the wind blew her along the beach, through a garden, and almost into a little white cottage, where a woman was standing with a baby in her arms.

She didn't seem to mind a bit when she saw a strange little girl come flying down the garden path to her house. She just laughed and cried, "This is another trick of my friend the wind." Then she laid the baby down in a cradle and took both Janie's hands, making her sit on the door step where the wind had dropped her.

"Please, ma'am," said Janie, when she could get her breath, "can you tell me what makes the boat sail?" The woman laughed again and answered, "Why, this beautiful wind blows her along, of course; that is only one of the hundreds of things the wind does for us. He can blow so hard that the great ships are just driven before him, and he can blow so softly that my baby is rocked to sleep. Look

at the cradle now." Janie looked, and there in the light wind which seemed to be full of the scent of blossoms, the cradle was rocking so gently that the baby had fallen asleep. Then the mother brought Janie a bowl of bread and milk, and while she ate it they talked about the wind.

"He blows away the dead leaves with such fury," said the mother, "that they tear along in front of my window like a flock of frightened birds. But when he finds a little flower beneath the leaves he blows on its petals so softly that it feels as if its mother were kissing it.

"Sometimes, when it comes from the North, it brings snow and hail and the beautiful frosts of winter. But when it comes from the South it brings sweet scents and soft, warm air. The East Wind often brings rain and mist, and some people don't like it, but the ground needs the rain, the flowers love it, and the East Wind is a gift from God, just as the others are. The West Wind is blowing to-day, and that is why the world looks so fresh and shining."

So they talked most of the afternoon, the

mother and Janie, until when the sun began to sink and the ship came sailing homeward, Janie turned again toward the city.

Very gently this time the wind blew her along, beside orchards where the trees were rustling their leaves like lullabies, and through meadows where, like sleepy children, the flowers were nodding their heads for good-night to the dear West Wind.

And although she was leaving it all, Janie was very happy. The woman in the cottage by the sea had told her to come back on her next holiday. And she knew that although she could not always see the dancing trees and flowers and waves and ships, she would remember that they were waiting for her every time she heard the wind rattling the window or blowing among the chimneys.

Just before she went to sleep she looked out of her tiny window through which a patch of sky could be seen. It was a dark, cloudy patch, and Janie was just turning away from it when the clouds began to move. The wind was still at work, in an instant the clouds had been blown away, and through that tiny win-

dow Janie saw a bright, clear star shining down upon her. "Thank you, dear wind," she whispered. And then, as she cuddled down to sleep she seemed to hear the wind, or was it the star, singing softly, "Thank God, thank God."

THE SPRINGING TREE: WILLOWS

Mrs. Dyson

THE willow is one of the greatest of Mother Nature's puzzles. It will give you years of pleasure before you have fully found out all its secrets. What is the puzzle? Perhaps you say, We all know a willow. Do you? Let us see how much you know. It is a weeping tree; its branches and leaves drop to the ground. That is true sometimes, not always. It grows by the water side. Neither is that always true. In early spring it has buds like soft pussy-cats, which you love to gather, and stroke against your faces, and in summer it has long narrow leaves.

Yes, but if you look at all the pussy-cats you can find, you will see that they are very different from one another. The willow has two kinds of tails growing on different trees. One tree has flowers made of stamens, another tree

has flowers containing seed-bags, and even of these two kinds you will find many different sorts. Then if you will look at the same trees when the leaves come out, you will perhaps be surprised to see that they have not all leaves of the same sort. Some are long, narrow and pointed, but some are broad and rounded; some are white and silky, some are crumpled and downy.

Now you see what is the great puzzle. When you see a tree with a long narrow leaf like a sword, you are sure at once it is a willow. The willow gives its name to this shape; for when we see other plants with leaves of this pattern, we always call them willow-leaves. The flowers of all the willows are very much alike. They all grow on tails, true pussy-cats' tails, so soft and silky are they. But they are the tails of angry pussy-cats, for they stand up straight and stiff and thick; they do not hang down wagging and waving in a good-tempered way. The flowers are soft silky scales, fastened closely together on the stalk. On the tails of one tree, under each scale, there are two, three or five slender stamens,

each with a double yellow head and between these and the stem there is a little honey-bag. Under the scales of another tree's tails there are beautiful silken seed-bags, shaped like pears, the pointed end just divided into two sticky horns. When the seeds are ripe, these lovely silk bags split open at the point, and the two horns curl back in a beautiful way, like two doors opening to make way for the crowd of tiny seeds, each one with a great plume of whitest silk, which tries to spread out to the sun and fresh air. The opening seed-bags of all the willows are a charming sight. What is all this silk for? To keep the seeds warm? Yes, and also to float them through the air to a place where they may take root and grow. You must look out for them early in the year, in late spring and early summer, long before other seeds are ripe. You will find that the birds are also on the lookout,—for food you suppose? No, they are building their nests, and they want something nice and soft with which to line them and make a comfortable bed for the eggs and the little birds; and what could they have

better than this yellow silk? The thistledown is all destroyed by the winter rains and there is nothing else ready yet.

The willow is the earliest tree, except the hazel, to say that spring is coming. It begins to get ready in the autumn. Then the buds swell and often burst, so that you can see the tufts of white silk peeping out as if the flowers were in such a hurry they could not wait till the spring. All the winter they are growing, but you are so busy skating and snow balling whenever you go out that you have no time to watch them, and are quite surprised at the first glimpse of the soft pussy-cats in the spring. At first only the silky scales show, but soon after the golden heads or the funny two-horned bottles hang out and the fruit is ripe by the time other trees have opened their flowers.

Some people say there are two hundred different kinds of willow trees but others think this is making too much of slight differences. There are about fifteen kinds which are so very different from one another that you will easily be able to discover them.

You already know well, four kinds of willow. Two of them are large trees; one of these is always found by the water-side bending over the still slow streams. It is called the *white* willow because its leaves are covered on both sides with soft white silk.

The other is the willow tree which grows most frequently in our gardens and by the road side. Its leaves are like those of the white willow in shape, but on the upper side they are bright green; with no silky covering. This is called the *crack* willow, because its branches crack and break at the joints so easily. Give them just a little blow and they snap at once. These are the only kinds of willow that grow into large trees. They are generally very crooked trees; their trunks split and bend and sometimes when near a stream they stretch over it as if they wanted to make a bridge across.

The other two willows that you know well are large shrubs or little trees not much taller than a man. One of them bears very silky catkins, and its leaves are always silky, quite white on the under side. This willow has

long, slender arms like fairies' wands. Cinderella's godmother may have used one of them. This is the osier of which we make our baskets. If you try to break off one of these long arms, you may tug and tug away, but all in vain, they are so tough; and as your hand slips there comes off into it a long roll of bark, leaving the branch smooth and white. You can bend these slender shoots as much as you like and still they will not snap, and so they are just what we want for weaving into light baskets.

The other shrub or little tree is perhaps the willow that you know best in the spring. It grows in the hedge everywhere and is called the *goat willow* or *sallow*. It has purplish brown branches and from it you probably gather your first pussy-cats. It flowers with the snowdrop, even while it is yet winter, in cold February or March. The first warm sunshine is better than any fairy's wand for it turns these flowers into gold. Then the bees rejoice; the food they have had in their hives during the winter is nearly done, and other flowers have scarcely dared to think of

opening yet. But the bees know the secrets of the flowers and they are quite aware of the wee honey bag hidden in every flower of that thick tail.

So you see this tree seems so full of life and joy, it grows so fast, and is so willing and obliging, that we call it by the name willow, which means the "springing" tree.

PUSSY WILLOW

Kate Louise Brown

ALL winter Miss Pussy had been shut up in her house by the brook; but one bright morning in early spring, the door of her house opened. Then she stepped out to see the world.

The swelling buds were rocking to and fro on the branches, the grass blades were peeping above the ground, and a few brave flowers were opening their sleepy eyes.

"Dear me!" cried Pussy, "the wind is sharp and cold, if it is a bright day."

"Why, whom have we here?" asked the brook in great surprise. "True as I live, it is Miss Pussy Willow! Good morning, Pussy, you are out bright and early; but why do you wear that fur hood? Summer is coming and the days grow warmer."

"Oh, Mother Nature told me to wear it, lest I get a toothache."

Everybody was glad to see Pussy. The

little brook, the grass, the buds, and the little spring birds. But they were all very curious to know why she wore her fur hood.

Poor Pussy! she was tempted more than once to take it off, so much was said about it. But she didn't; she thought best to mind Mother Nature. Now, it grieves me to say Mr. Robin was very bold and saucy. He whispered some unkind things to Pussy's friends one day. The next morning, when Pussy opened her eyes, the birds, the buds, the brook, the grass, and the flowers began to whisper to themselves: "Do you suppose Pussy Willow has to wear her hood because she has no hair? Poor Pussy Willow!"

Poor Pussy Willow! Brave Pussy felt very sad. All she said was: "Wait and see."

How surprised every one was a few days after this! There was Pussy Willow with no fur hood on her head, but bright golden curls were dancing up and down in the breeze.

"Pussy Willow is not a baldhead; she wears beautiful golden curls," cried all her friends. Mr. Robin hid his head and flew away, very much ashamed.

THE DRAGON FLY

Mrs. Alfred Gatty

"I WONDER what becomes of the Frog when he climbs up out of this world, and disappears so that we do not see even his shadow; till, plop! he is among us again. Does anybody know where he goes to?"

Thus chattered the grub of a Dragon fly as he darted about with his companions in and out among the plants at the bottom of a beautiful pond in the centre of a wood.

"Who cares what the Frog does?" answered one who overheard the Grub's question, "what is it to us?"

"Look out for food for yourself and let other people's business alone," cried another. "But I should like to know," said the grub. "I can see all of you when you pass by me among the plants in the water here, and when I don't see you any longer I wonder where you have gone. I followed the Frog just now as he went upwards, and all at once he

went to the side of the water, then he began to disappear and presently he was gone. Did he leave this world? And where did he go?"

"You idle fellow," cried another. "See what a good bite you have missed with your wonderings about nothing." So saying he seized an insect which was flitting right in front of the Grub.

Suddenly there was a heavy splash in the water and a large yellow Frog swam down to the bottom among the grubs.

"Ask the Frog himself," suggested a minnow as he darted by overhead.

Such a chance of satisfying himself was not to be lost, and after taking two or three turns round the roots of a water-lily, the grub screwed up his courage and, approaching the Frog, asked, "Is it permitted to a very unhappy creature to speak?"

The Frog turned his gold edged eyes upon him in surprise and answered, "Very unhappy creatures had better be silent. I never talk but when I'm happy."

"But I shall be happy if I may talk," said the Grub.

"Talk away then," said the Frog.

"But it is something I want to ask you."

"Ask away," exclaimed the Frog.

"What is there beyond the world?" inquired the Grub in a very quiet way.

"What world do you mean—this pond?" asked the Frog, rolling his goggle eyes round and round.

"I mean the place we live in whatever you may choose to call it. I call it the world," said the Grub.

"Do you, sharp little fellow? Then what is the place you don't live in?"

"That's just what I want you to tell me," replied the little Grub.

"Oh, indeed, little one. I shall tell you, then. It is dry land."

"Can one swim about there?" inquired the Grub.

"I should think not," chuckled the Frog.

"Dry land is not water. That is just what it is *not*. Dry land is something like the sludge at the bottom of this pond, only it is not wet because there's no water."

"Really! What is there then?"

"That's the difficulty," exclaimed Froggy. "There is something, of course, they call it air, but how to explain it I don't know. Now just take my advice and ask no more silly questions. I tell you the thing is not worth your troubling yourself about. But I admire your spirit," continued the Frog. "I will make you an offer. If you choose to take a seat on my back I will carry you up to dry land and you can judge for yourself what is there and how you like it."

"I accept with gratitude, honoured Frog," said the little Grub.

"Drop yourself down on my back, then, and cling to me as well as you can. Come now, hold fast."

The little Grub obeyed and the Frog, swimming gently upwards, soon reached the bulrushes by the water's side.

"Hold fast," repeated the Frog, and then, raising his head out of the pond, he clambered up the bank and got upon the grass.

"Now, then, here we are," exclaimed the Frog. "What do you think of dry land?"

But no one answered.

"Hallow! Gone? That's just what I was afraid of. He has floated off my back, stupid fellow. But perhaps he has made his way to the water's edge here after all, and then I can help him out. I'll wait about and see."

And away went Froggy with a leap along the grass by the edge of the pond glancing every now and then among the bulrushes to see if he could spy his little friend, the dragon fly grub.

But what had become of the little grub? He had really clung to the Frog's back with all his might; but the moment the mask of his face began to issue from the water, a shock seemed to strike his frame and he reeled from his resting place back into the pond panting and struggling for life.

"Terrible," he cried as soon as he came to himself. "The Frog has deceived me. He cannot go there, at any rate." And with these words, the little Grub moved away to his old companions to talk over with them what he had done and where he had been.

"It was terrible, terrible. But the sun is beginning to set and I must take a turn around

the pond in search of food." And away went the little dragon fly grub for a ramble among the water plants.

On his return who should he see sitting calmly on a stone at the bottom of the pond but his friend the yellow Frog.

"You here!" cried the startled Grub. "You never left this world at all then. How you deceived me, Frog!"

"Clumsy fellow," replied the Frog. "Why did you not sit fast as I told you?"

The little Grub soon told his story while the Frog sat staring at him in silence out of his great goggle eyes.

"And now," said the Grub, "since there is nothing beyond this world, all your stories of going there must be mere inventions. As I have no wish to be fooled by any more of your tales, I will bid you a very good evening."

"You'll do no such thing," said the Frog, "until you have heard my story."

"As you wish," answered the Grub.

Then the Frog told him how he had lingered by the edge of the pond in hope of seeing the little Grub again, how he had hopped

about in the grass, how he had peeped among the bulrushes.

"And at last," he continued, "though I did not see you yourself, I saw a sight which has more interest for you than for any other creature that lives," and then the Frog stopped speaking.

"What was it?" asked the inquisitive little Grub.

"Up the polished green stalk of one of those bulrushes I saw a little dragon-fly grub slowly and gradually climb till he had left the water behind him. As I continued to look, I noticed that a rent seemed to come in your friend's body. I cannot tell you in what way the thing happened, but after many struggles, there came from it one of those beautiful creatures who float through the air and dazzle the eyes of all who catch glimpses of them as they pass—a glorious Dragon-fly!

"As if just waking from a dream he lifted his wings out of the covering. Though shrivelled and damp at first they stretched and expanded in the sunshine till they glistened as if with fire. I saw the beautiful creature

at last poise himself for a second or two in the air before he took flight. I saw the four gauzy wings flash back the sunshine that was poured on them. I heard the clash with which they struck the air and I saw his body give out rays of glittering blue and green as he darted along and away over the water in circles that seemed to know no end. Then I plunged below to find you out and tell you the good news."

"It's a wonderful story," said the little Grub.

"A wonderful story, indeed," repeated the Frog.

"And you really think, then, that the glorious creature you saw was once a—"

"Silence," cried the Frog. "All your questions have been answered. It is getting dark here in your world. I must return to my grassy home on dry land. Go to rest, little fellow, and awake in hopes."

The Frog swam close to the bank and clambered up its side while the little Grub returned to his companions to wait and hope.

THE CICADA'S STORY *

AGNES MCCLELLAN DAULTON

ONCE upon a time a grasshopper introduced me to Mr. Periodical Cicada. He was a very pleasant fellow and not a bit stuck up, although the poets have written of him, and almost every one knows him by the name of seventeen year locust, though he really is not a locust at all. I was pleased to meet him, and asked him if he would mind telling me what he did all those seventeen years, and he replied:

"Not at all, now that they are over it is very pleasant to talk about them." Then he began his story. "Seventeen years ago this June, in an old orchard, my mother tucked away in the green twigs of a mossy apple tree hundreds of little cradles. I was sleeping in one and in the others were my brothers and sisters. While my mother was at work our father sat

* By courtesy of the author.

on a twig close by and sang the merriest lullaby that babies ever listened to.

"Several weeks later we little ones crept out of our cradles and dropped lightly to the ground beneath the tree; then each of us dug a little burrow and hid ourselves away in the warm, moist soil near sappy rootlets that gave us our food.

"We were very tiny at first, but little by little we grew, always making our cells bigger to fit, so that we were as snug and cosy as babies could be, only it was very dark and lonely.

"The rootlets would tell us when it was spring, of how the pink and white blossoms were holding up perfumed cups to the blue sky; of the tree musical with the humming of the bees that came for honey; then of summer, when birds nested and sang among the green boughs; later of autumn, of apples mellow and ripe, globes of red and gold, that fell with a muffled thud in the long, green grass; and at last of the winter, and of the fleecy snow that clothed the old tree in soft white. They whispered of heat, of cold, of sunshine and rain, of freezing winds and balmy breezes,

but we baby Cicadas neither understood nor cared, and there tucked away in our gloomy cells we lived seventeen long years.

"But one May day, in the sweetest of apple blossoming time, all we little Cicadas made up our minds to go out into the world and seek our fortunes. Then every one of us began digging and carrying up to the surface tiny pellets of soft clay.

"My, but we did work hard, and by the time the big sun had hidden his round face in the west each of us had built a funny little chimney six inches high."

"Oh, how lovely!" I cried; "and please, Mr. Periodical Cicada, what were they for?"

But the Cicada only shook his head at me gravely, as much as to say that it was a Cicada family secret.

"When the chimneys were done," he went on, "we all scrambled up and began hunting a safe place to rest. I soon found a fine twig where I held on for dear life. I wasn't very pretty, being dressed in a brown coat, and besides, I had gotten very muddy building my chimney. Now while I was hanging there

hoping to dry off—click—and goodness me! if my little brown jacket hadn't split down my back from collar to waistband. I felt very bad, for even if it was a muddy, ugly brown coat, it was all I had, and I had no idea where to get another in the big, cold world I had just come into. But when I stepped out of my coat to see if I could mend it, my stockings and shoes came off with it and there I hung, if you will believe me, dressed in the prettiest cream-coloured suit you ever saw. I never was more surprised in my life.

"Just then, I happened to catch a glimpse of one of my sisters, and she also was in cream, and there was a brother; yes, there was the whole family, and every one of us in a lovely suit of cream-colour. But, oh, when we got a good look at each other we laughed till we almost fell from our perches, for each of us had pink eyes and heavy, fierce eyebrows, and queer humps on the sides of our necks. Such a ridiculous looking lot of youngsters you never saw. Beside us hung our old, muddy clothes, coat, shoes, stockings, and all. If you look in the orchard you can often find these

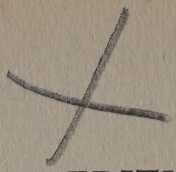
old clothes long after the Cicadas have flown away."

"Oh, Mr. Cicada, how I should love to have seen you!" I exclaimed. "I shall look for little brown coats as soon as I get home."

"This was only the beginning," went on Periodical. "The most wonderful things were to come; for slowly, slowly those humps on our necks began to swell, and after a time they opened out into two lovely, gauzy wings, veined with pearl colour. When the great round moon came gliding up over the orchard and shed down upon us her gentle, silvery light, there we hung like some strange, beautiful flowers. The apple blossoms thought we were flowers and whispered to us some of the prettiest honey and pollen secrets; they were so provoked when we flew away and they found out their mistake—but they need not fear for we will never tell; no, indeed, never!

"When morning came we found our beauty had been very fleeting, for our lovely cream-coloured suits had changed to greenish-brown, and our wings, though still transparent, were dull of colour. The males among us were

drummers. Deep within my body, I carried two drums, each being covered by a plate that you can easily see on the outside. Now, I don't need drumsticks, for my drums are air instruments, and by twitching my muscles I can snap my drumheads faster and faster, making the gayest sort of a roll-call. Listen to this: *Whirr-r-r-r-r!*"



EDITH AND THE BEES

HELEN KELLER

ONE beautiful morning last June, a sweet little girl thought she would go out into the garden and pick some flowers for one of her playmates, who was sick and obliged to stay shut up in the house this fragrant summer morning. "Tommy shall have the most beautiful flowers in the garden," thought Edith, as she took her little basket and pruning scissors, and ran out into the garden. She looked like a lovely fairy or a sunbeam, flitting about the rose-bushes. I think she was the most exquisite rose in all the garden herself. Her heart was full of thoughts of Tommy, while she worked away busily. "I wish I knew something that would please Tommy more than anything else!" she said to herself. "I would love to make him happy," and she sat down on the edge of a beautiful fountain to think.

While she sat there thinking, two dear little

birds began to take their bath in the lovely, sparkling water that rippled and danced in the sunshine. They would plunge into the water and come out dripping, perch on the side of the fountain for a moment, and plunge in again. Then they would shake the bright drops from their feathers, and fly away singing sweeter than ever. Edith thought the little birds enjoyed their bath as much as her baby brother did his.

When they had flown away to a distant tree, Edith noticed a beautiful pink rosebud, more beautiful than any she had yet seen. "Oh, how lovely you are!" she cried; and, running to the bush where it was, she bent down the branch, that she might examine it more closely, when out of the heart of the rose came a small insect and stung her pretty cheek. The little girl began to weep loudly, and ran to her father who was working in another part of the yard. "Why, my little girl!" said he, "a bee has stung you." He drew out the sting, and bathed her swollen cheek in cool water, at the same time telling her many interesting things about the wonderful little bees.

"Do not cry any more, my child," said her father, "and I will take you to see a kind gentleman who keeps many hives of bees."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Edith, brushing away her tears. "I will run and get ready now."

The bee-master, as everybody called the old man who kept the bees, was very glad to show his little pets, and to tell Edith all he knew about them. He led her to a hive, made wholly of glass, so that she might watch the bees at their work.

"There are three kinds of bees in every hive," said the gentleman. "That large bee in the middle is the queen bee. She is the most important bee in the hive. She has a sting, but seldom makes use of it. Those busy bees are the worker bees. It was probably a worker that stung you this morning, my little girl," said the bee-master.

Edith thought she did not like the worker bee as well as the others; but when she heard what industrious little workers they are, and how they take all the care of the young bees,

build the cells of wax, and bring in the honey, she felt much more affection for them.

"What do the bees do in winter when there are no flowers from which to gather honey?" inquired Edith.

"They sleep during the long, cold winter days, and awaken when the warm spring returns," replied her kind instructor.

"Now," said Edith's father, "we had better go, or you will not get to see Tommy to-day."

Then the little girl thanked her new friend for telling her so much about his interesting pets, and promised to come and see him as often as she could.

"Oh, father!" cried Edith, as they walked homeward, "I am almost glad that the naughty little bee stung me this morning, for now I shall have something interesting to tell Tommy."

THE LITTLE TADPOLE*

KATHARINE PYLE

THE brook flows down past the field, around the hill, and through the wood.

There are all sorts of things in the brook: water cress and snails, and little darting fishes, eelgrass and crawfish, and under a stone where the water is cool and deep a little brown lizard used to live.

The lizard was a busy little thing, always anxious about something or other. She told the crawfish when to shed their shells; she showed the snails where to find dead leaves; and she attended to every one else's business as well as her own.

One day when she was crawling up the stream, she saw a tadpole lying in a sunny shallow, with its nose almost out of the water.

"That tadpole oughtn't to lie there in the sun," said the lizard to herself. "It's too

* From "Pyle's Prose and Verse For Children." Copyright 1899, by Katherine Pyle, American Book Co.

warm. I think I'll tell him." So she crawled up to where the tadpole was lying.

As she came nearer she heard the tadpole whispering softly to himself. "Oh, how beautiful! how beautiful!" he was saying.

"What is so beautiful?" asked the lizard curiously, looking about her.

"That singing!" cried the tadpole. "Don't you hear it?"

And now that the lizard listened, she did indeed hear a perfect chorus of birds singing their morning songs in wood and field and thicket.

"Yes, it's pretty enough," said the lizard. "But you oughtn't to be lying here in the hot sun. You'll make yourself sick."

The tadpole only wriggled impatiently, and then lay still, listening. But presently he turned his little dull eyes on the lizard. "I suppose you have often seen birds coming down to the stream to bathe," he said. "Do you think I look anything like one?"

"Like a bird!" cried the lizard. "No, you don't."

"Well, I don't see why not," said the tad-

pole. "To be sure, I haven't any legs, but I have a tail."

"Yes," said the lizard, "but birds have beaks and feathers and wings as well, and you haven't anything but a body and a tail."

"That is true," said the tadpole, and he sighed heavily.

As the lizard had said, it was warm up in the shallow where the tadpole lay; but she was curious now as to why the tadpole should want to look like a bird, so she settled herself down more comfortably and went on talking.

"Now, I should like to know," she said, "why you want to look like a bird."

At first the tadpole made no answer; he seemed to be either shy or dull, but when the lizard asked him again, he said: "I don't know."

Then he was silent again; and the lizard was about to go away when the tadpole suddenly went on: "It's because there seems to be something inside of me that must sing, and I've tried and tried, until all the fishes and even the snails laugh at me, and I can't make a

sound. I think if I only had legs, and could hop about like a bird, I could do it."

"But I don't see why you should want to sing," said the lizard. "I never did."

Still, the tadpole seemed so grieved about it that she felt sorry for him, and stayed there in the shallow talking to him for quite a long time; and the next morning she went to see him again.

This was the beginning of a friendship between the two; and though the lizard could not understand why the tadpole should wish to sing, she never made fun of him, but tried to think of some plan by which he might learn to do it.

Once she suggested that if he were only up on the shore he might be able to do something about it. So he wriggled himself up half out of the water; but almost immediately he grew so sick that the lizard had to pull him back again by his tail, feeling terribly frightened, all the while, lest it should break.

It was the very next morning that the lizard found the tadpole in a state of wild excite-

ment. "Oh, Lizard, Lizard!" he cried, shaking all over from his nose to his tail. "Just look at me! I'm getting legs."

It was true. There they were, still very small and weak, but really legs. The lizard and the tadpole had been too busy talking over how to make them grow to notice that they were already budding. They were still more excited when, soon afterwards, they saw near the front part of the tadpole's body two more little buds; and the lizard was sure these would prove to be wings.

It was a terrible blow to them when they found these were not wings at all, but more legs. "Now it's all over," cried the tadpole, in despair. "It was bad enough not to have wings; but now that I'm getting legs this way, there's no knowing where it'll end."

The lizard, too, was almost hopeless, until suddenly she remembered a crawfish she had known who had lost one of his legs in a fight, and it had hardly hurt him at all. She said perhaps she could pull the tadpole's front legs off the same way.

He was quite willing for her to try, but at

the first twitch she gave he cried out, "Ouch! that hurts!" so the lizard had to stop.

She still thought, however, that something could have been done about it if the tadpole had not been such a coward and had let her pull harder.

But worse was to follow.

One morning, before the lizard was up, the tadpole came wriggling over to the door of her house.

"Lizard, Lizard, come out here," he cried. Then, as soon as she came out, he begged her to get a piece of eelgrass and measure his tail.

"I've been afraid it was shrinking for some time," he said, "and now I'm almost sure of it. I have such strange feelings, too. Sometimes I feel as though I must have air, and I get up on a stone so that I'm almost out of the water, and only then am I comfortable."

Hastily the lizard got the eelgrass and measured. Then they sat staring at each other in dismay. The tail was almost gone!

Still, the lizard would not give up all hope.

That same crawfish that had lost a leg lived farther down the stream, and he was very old

and wise. She would get him to come and look at the tadpole and give his advice.

So the kindly little lizard bustled away, and soon she came back, to where the tadpole was lying, and the crawfish came with her, twiddling his feelers, and staring both ways with his goggle eyes.

"Sick tadpole!" he cried. "This is no tadpole!" Then, coming closer, the crawfish went on: "Why are you lying here? Why aren't you over in the swamp singing with all the rest of them? Don't you know you are a frog?"

"A frog!" cried the lizard.

But the young tadpole frog leaped clear out of the brook with a joyous cry.

"A frog!" he shouted. "Why, that's the best of all! If that's true I must say good-bye, little Lizard. Hey for the wide green swamp and the loud frog chorus under the light of the moon! Good-bye, little friend, good-bye! I shall never forget what you have done for me."

So the frog went away to join his brothers.

The little lizard felt quite lonely for a while after the frog had gone; but she comforted

herself by thinking how happy he must be.

Often in the twilight, or when the moon was bright, she listened to the chorus of frogs as they sang over in the swamp, and wondered if the one who sang so much louder and deeper than the rest was the little frog who had tried so hard to be a bird.

"After all," she said to herself, "there are more ways of singing than one."

MISTER HOP-TOAD

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

HOWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!
Bin a month o' Sundays since I seen you hereabout.
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?
Glad to see you out ag'in, it's been so long ago.

BUZ AND HUM

MAURICE NOEL

THE time came when Buz and Hum, two young bees, were allowed to try their wings.

"Follow me," said a friendly older bee; "I can spare time to fly a little way; and when I stop, you stop, too."

"All right," cried Buz, trembling with excitement.

Hum said nothing, but her wings began to move, almost in spite of herself.

Away went the bee, as straight as a line from the mouth of the hive, and away flew Buz and Hum after her; but at first starting they both found it a little difficult to keep quite straight, and Buz knocked against the board to begin with, and nearly stopped herself, as she had not learned how to rise.

The older bee did not go far, and lit on the branch of a peach tree which was growing against a wall near by. Buz came after her

in a great hurry, but missed the branch and gave herself a bang against the wall. Hum saw this, and managed to stop herself in time; but she did not judge her distance very well either; and got on the peach tree in a scrambling sort of way.

"Very good," said their friend, as they all three stood together; "you will soon be able to take care of yourself now; but just let me see you back to the hive."

So off they flew again, and lighted on the board in a very creditable manner.

"Now," said the bee, "I shall leave you; but before I go let me advise you, as a friend, not to quit the garden to-day; there are plenty of flowers, and plenty of opportunities for you to meet with 'Experience,' without flying over any of the four walls."

"Who is Experience?" asked Buz and Hum together.

"Oh! somebody to whom you are going to be introduced, who will teach you more in a day than you could learn from me in a week. Good-bye."

So saying, she disappeared into the hive.

"Isn't it too delightful?" exclaimed Buz to Hum. "Flying! why it's even more fun that I thought!"

"It is," said Hum; "but I should like to get some honey at once."

"Of course," replied Buz, "only I should like to fly a long way to get it."

"I want to fill a cell quickly," said Hum.

"Oh, yes, to be sure! What a delightful thing it will be to put one's proboscis down into every flower and see what's there! Do you know," added Buz, putting out her proboscis, "I feel as if I could suck honey tremendously; don't you?"

"Yes, yes," cried Hum. "I long to be at it; let's be off at once."

So away they went and lit on a bed of flowers. Hum spent the day between the hive and that bed, and was quite, quite happy; but Buz, though she, too, liked collecting the honey, wanted to have more excitement in getting it; and every now and then, as she passed to and from the hive, a lovely field of clover, not far off, sent forth such a delicious smell, as the

breeze swept over it, that she was strongly tempted to disregard the advice she had been given, and to hurry off to it.

At last she could stand it no longer; and, rising high into the air, she sailed over the wall and went out into the world beyond.

And so she reached the field of clover, and, flying quite low over the flowers, was astonished to see how many bees were busy among them—bumble-bees without end, and plenty of honey-bees, too; in fact, the air was filled with the pleasant murmur that they made.

"To be sure," said Buz to herself, "this is the place for me! Poor, dear old Hum! I hope she is enjoying herself as much as I am. I don't mean to be idle either, so here goes for some honey."

Buz was very diligent, indeed, and soon collected as much honey as she could carry. But by the time she had done this she found herself close to the farther end of the clover field, and while resting for a moment, before starting to carry her load to the hive, she noticed a little pond in the corner. Feeling

thirsty after her hard work, she flew off to take a few sips; but just as she reached the pond and was in the act of descending, a light gust of wind caught her and turned her half over, and before she could recover herself she was plunged far out into the water!

Poor Buz! She was a brave little bee, but this was a terrible accident; and after a few wild struggles she almost gave herself up. The water was so cold, and she felt herself so helpless in it; and then the accident had happened so suddenly, and taken her so utterly by surprise, that it is no wonder she lost courage. Only for a moment though; just as she was giving up in despair the hard and seemingly useless work of paddling and struggling with all her poor little legs at once, she saw that a bit of stick was floating near her, and with renewed energy she attempted to get to it. Alas! It was all she could do to keep her head above water; as for moving along through it, that seemed impossible, and she was tempted to give up once more. It was very hard though; there was the stick, not more than a foot away from her. If she could

only reach it! At any rate, she was determined it should not be her fault if she was unsuccessful; so she battled away harder than ever, though her strength began to fail and she was becoming numbed with the cold. Just as she made this last effort another gust of wind swept over the pond, and Buz saw that the stick began to move through the water, and to come nearer and nearer to her. The fact was that a small twig sticking up from it acted as a sail, though Buz did not know this. And now the stick was quite close, almost within reach; in another moment she would be on it. Ah! but a moment seems a long time when one is at the last gasp, as poor Buz was.

Would she be drowned after all? No! Just as she was sinking she touched the stick with one little claw, and held on as only drowning people can; and then she got another claw safely lodged, and was able to rest for a moment. Oh! the relief of *that,* after such a long ceaseless struggle!

But even then it was very hard to get up on the stick, very hard indeed. However, Buz

managed it at last, and dragged herself quite out of the cold water.

By this time the breeze was blowing steadily over the pond, and the stick would soon reach the bank; but Buz felt very miserable and cold, and her wings clung tightly to her, and she looked dreadfully forlorn.

The pond, too, was overshadowed by trees so there were no sunbeams to warm her. "Ah," thought she, "if I can manage to drag myself up into the sunshine and rest and be well warmed, I shall soon be better."

Well, the bank was safely reached at last! but Buz, all through her life, never forgot what a business it was climbing up the side. The long grasses yielded to her weight, and bent almost straight down, as if on purpose to make it as up-hill work for her as possible. And even when she reached the top it took her a weary while to get across the patch of dark shadow and out into the glad sunlight beyond; but she managed to arrive there at last, and crawling on the top of a stone which had been well warmed by the sun's rays, she rested for a long time.

At last she recovered sufficiently to make her way, by a succession of short flights, back to the hive. After the first of these flights she felt so dreadfully weak that she almost doubted being able to accomplish the journey, and began to despond.

"If I ever do get home," she said to herself, "I will tell Hum all about it, and how right she was to take advice."

Now, whether it was the exercise that did her good, or that the sun's rays became hotter that afternoon, cannot be known, but this is certain, that Buz felt better after every flight. When she reached the end of the clover field, she sipped a little honey, cleaned herself with her feet, stretched her wings, and, with the sun glistening brightly on her, looked quite fine again. Her last flight brought her to the top of the kitchen-garden wall. After resting here, she opened her wings and flew gaily to the hive, which she entered just as if nothing had happened.

THE STORY WITHOUT AN END

IN THE GREEN MEADOW

Translated by Sarah Austin from the German of A. Carove

THERE was once a child who lived in a little hut, and in the hut there was nothing but a little bed, and a looking-glass which hung in a dark corner. Now the child cared nothing at all about the looking-glass, but as soon as the first sunbeam glided softly through the casement and kissed his sweet eyelids, and the finch and the linnet waked him merrily with their morning songs, he arose and went out into the green meadow. And he begged flour of the primrose, and sugar of the violet, and butter of the buttercup; he shook dew-drops from the cowslip into the cup of a harebell; spread out a large lime-leaf, set his little breakfast upon it, and feasted daintily. Sometimes he invited a humming bee, oftener a gay butterfly, to partake of his feast; but his

favourite guest was the blue dragon-fly. The bee murmured a good deal, in a solemn tone, about his riches; but the child thought that if *he* were a bee, heaps of treasure would not make him gay and happy; and that it must be much more delightful and glorious to float about in the free and fresh breezes of spring, and to hum joyously in the web of the sunbeams, than, with heavy feet and heavy heart, to stow the silver wax and the golden honey into cells.

To this the butterfly assented and he told how, once on a time, he too had been greedy and sordid; how he had thought of nothing but eating, and had never once turned his eyes upwards to the blue heavens. At length, however, a complete change had come over him and instead of crawling spiritless about the dirty earth, half dreaming, he all at once awaked as out of a deep sleep. And now he could rise into the air and it was his greatest joy sometimes to play with the light, and to reflect the heavens in the bright eyes of his wings, sometimes to listen to the soft language of the flowers, and catch their secrets. Such

talk delighted the child, and his breakfast was the sweeter to him and the sunshine on leaf and flower seemed to him more bright and cheering.

But when the bee had flown off to beg from flower to flower, and the butterfly had fluttered away to his playfellows, the dragon-fly still remained poised on a blade of grass. Her slender and burnished body, more brightly and deeply blue than the deep blue sky, glistened in the sunbeam and her net-like wings laughed at the flowers because *they* could not fly, but must stand still and abide the wind and the rain. The dragon-fly sipped a little of the child's clear dew-drops and blue-violet honey, and then whispered her winged words. And the child made an end of his repast, closed his dark blue eyes, bent down his beautiful head, and listened to the sweet prattle.

Then the dragon-fly told much of the merry life in the green wood,—how sometimes she played hide-and-seek with her playfellows under the broad leaves of the oak and the beech trees or hunt-the-hare along the sur-

face of the still waters or sometimes quietly watched the sunbeams, as they flew busily from moss to flower and from flower to bush, and shed life and warmth over all. But at night, she said, the moonbeams glided softly around the wood, and dropped dew into the mouths of all the thirsty plants; and when the dawn pelted the slumberers with the soft roses of heaven, some of the half-drunken flowers looked up and smiled, but most of them could not so much as raise their heads for a long, long time.

Such stories did the dragon-fly tell and as the child sat motionless, with his eyes shut, and his head rested on his little hand, she thought he had fallen asleep, so poised her double wings and flew into the rustling wood.

THE STORY OF A DROP OF WATER

But the child was only sunk into a dream of delight, and was wishing *he* were a sunbeam or a moonbeam; and he would have been glad to hear more and more, and forever. But at last, as all was still, he opened his eyes and looked around for his dear guest, but she

was flown far away; so he could not bear to sit there any longer alone, and he rose and went to the gurgling brook. It gushed and rolled so merrily, and tumbled so wildly along as it hurried to throw itself head-over-heels into the river, just as if the great massy rock out of which it sprang were close behind it, and could only be escaped by a break-neck leap.

Then the child began to talk to the little waves, and asked them whence they came. They would not stay to give him an answer, but danced away, one over another, till at last, that the sweet child might not be grieved, a drop of water stopped behind a piece of rock. From her the child heard strange histories; but he could not understand them all, for she told him about her former life, about the depths of the mountain.

"A long while ago," said the drop of water, "I lived with my countless sisters in the great ocean, in peace and unity. We had all sorts of pastimes; sometimes we mounted up high into the air, and peeped at the stars; then we sank plump down deep below, and watched

how the coral-builders work till they are tired, that they may reach the light of day at last. But I was conceited, and thought myself much better than my sisters. And so one day, when the sun rose out of the sea, I clung fast to one of his hot beams, and thought that now I should reach the stars, and become one of them. But I had not ascended far, when the sunbeam shook me off, and, in spite of all I could say or do, let me fall into a dark cloud. And soon a flash of fire darted through the cloud, and now I thought I must surely die; but the whole cloud laid itself down softly upon the top of a mountain, and so I escaped. Now I thought I should remain hidden, when all on a sudden, I slipped over a round pebble, fell from one stone to another, down into the depths of the mountain, till at last it was pitch dark, and I could neither see nor hear anything. Then I found, indeed, that 'pride goeth before a fall,' resigned myself to my fate, and, as I had already laid aside all my unhappy pride in the cloud, my portion was now the salt of humility; and after undergoing many purifications from the hidden

virtues of metals and minerals, I was at length permitted to come up once more into the free cheerful air and now will I run back to my sisters, and there wait patiently till I am called to something better."

But hardly had she done when the root of a forget-me-not caught the drop of water by her hair, and sucked her in, that she might become a floweret, and twinkle brightly as a blue star on the green firmament of earth.

LEGEND OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

THERE was once a little plant that grew by a shady brook. It had many companions even in this quiet spot. The great branches of the old tree stretched over it, and the beautiful flowers were friendly; but it did not seem happy. The flowers often thought they heard it sigh as its head drooped almost to the ground.

"How I wish I might have flowers like the other plants," it said to itself, "blue ones, the colour of the beautiful sky. There is so much blue, surely some could be spared for the earth. Then the children would not always need to look up to see the sky." But it kept its secret close to its heart and only bent its head a little lower.

"What makes you droop so, little plant?" asked one of the flowers. "Your leaves are quite down again. Surely the sun is not too warm here."

"Tell us," said the others, "perhaps we can be of some help to you. We want to see you look up again at the sky as you used to do."

"It would be of no use to tell you," answered the little plant. "I have often whispered my secret to the old tree as its branches swayed near me, but it has all been of no use," and its head bent lower and lower.

"Perhaps," said the flowers to each other, "perhaps our Angel can be of some help. Let us speak to her."

And when evening came, and the Angel closed the flowers as she kissed them good-night, she heard one whisper, "Something makes our little friend very sad. She will not tell us. See if she will tell you her secret." They saw the Angel stoop down and whisper something to the little plant and go away.

"See how our little companion has raised its head this morning," said the grasses.

"An Angel visited her last night," one answered.

By and by a day came when the little plant was covered with many tiny blossoms. The

other flowers rejoiced to see them. "We've guessed your secret. What beautiful flower children—blue, like the sky. It makes the sky seem very near."

"That is my secret," answered the little plant. "When I told it to the Angel I said, 'My flowers must be just the colour of the sky.' And she whispered, 'Then always look up, for your flowers will be like that which you love most.' Then she went away."

The Forget-me-not was happy. She never drooped her head again, and the Angel always kissed her good-night as she passed by.

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER *

ELLA HIGGINSON

I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.
I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another one in for luck,
If you search you will find where they grow.
I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong, and so
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.
I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow.

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JOLLY LITTLE TARS

AGNES MCCLELLAN DAULTON

"TUR-R-R-R-T, tre-t-t," trilled a tree-toad who was perched one June day, on a log at the water's edge. "This is a perfect day for us Water-folk. Surely there never was such blue in the sky, such green in the grass, nor such dimpling cloud shadows skipping about everywhere. It is the very day to sit down and dream."

"We think it just the day for a race," cried a whirligig beetle who was whizzing past. "Come on, Whirligigs! let us see who will win this time." And away they went with a dash, flash, and spin, a long curve here, a quick turn there, faster and faster.

"My, my!" said the tree-toad, half closing his eyes. "It seems to me every day is the day for a race with those Whirligigs. I never saw one of them meditating in my life. It makes me dizzy and gives me a headache to

watch them spinning. It is a wonder they don't dash themselves to pieces."

"Not they," yawned a little snapping-turtle, who had been drowsing on a stone near by. "If you look close at a Whirligig, you will see that he is nearly as well protected as I am in my strong shell. How you exist with that soft body of yours is more than I can understand. You are a peaceable sort of fellow, but your best friend must admit that you are very ugly."

"No such thing," sputtered the tree-toad, leaning far out to look at his reflection in the water. "I'm nothing of the sort. My mother says that I was the handsomest polliwog in the family. You are forced to wear one dress always, and that a dull old shell, while I change the colour of my clothes to suit the occasion, as all well-bred persons should. This morning I am wearing a full suit of grey-brown; that is because it matches so perfectly this lichen-covered log upon which I am seated. When I go swimming, my bathing suit is ashen grey, with green trimmings.

If I were to visit the swamp maples I should don plain brown, and if I should take a hop in the grass I should wear a beautiful dress suit of green. I am Mr. Hyla Versicolour, I'd have you know. See how rough and warty my back is; that is a sign of good family among toads. Watch me puff out my throat like a great white bubble as I whistle my tur-r-r-r-t, tre-t-t! Besides having a winning voice and power to change my colour I can breathe through my skin. I have a remarkable foot, also. Look at this delicate webbing, and these cunning little disks at the ends of my toes. I can climb as well as swim, Mr. Snapper. See me dart out my tongue; it is fastened in front and free at the back, so that I may catch a fly in a flash.

"Ugly fellow, indeed!" Mr. Hyla puffed out his throat as far as he could. "Fiddlesticks!" snapped the turtle, slipping into the pool with a splash. "You are a worse boaster than a water-boatman. Talk to yourself, please," and away he swam.

"That Snapper always was a disagreeable

fellow," mused Hyla, with his eyes half shut. "There come those Whirligigs back. I wonder which one beat."

"Pooh, how could a Whirligig beat?" scornfully asked a water-strider who had overheard the tree-toad. "They swim in circles, the foolish things."

"That's all you know about Whirligig racing," cried the largest whirligig, who was swimming near. "We *all* win every race. But of course you can't expect a common water-strider with only one pair of eyes to understand that."

"One pair of eyes!" exclaimed Hyla. "Why, have you more eyes than the rest of us, Mr. Whirligig?"

"Certainly," replied the beetle, proudly. "We are not given to boasting, but, since you ask, I will say that we Whirligigs have many remarkable traits. Our family name is Gyrinidæ."

"Who cares for that?" shouted the angry water-strider, skating toward the whirligig with all his might. "Get out of the road, you beetle, or I will skate you down! Ugh,

what a horrid perfume you use! How dare you, sir!" gasped the strider, as the whirligig swam away, leaving the poor strider gasping and sputtering on the other side of the pool.

"Keep your distance, then," called the whirligig after him.

"He won't bother me for a time," laughed the beetle to the tree-toad. "You see I have the power to give off a milky fluid from my joints, and common water-folk object to the odour, but it is my only way to get on with these skaters."

"But do you really mean," asked the Hyla, "that you have more eyes than the rest of us?"

"I certainly do," replied the beetle with dignity. "We Whirligigs have a second pair of eyes under our chins, which enable us to see to the bottom of the pool as we swim about, and most convenient we find them."

"Wonderful! wonderful!" The Hyla could scarcely express his amazement. "I suppose that is the reason you never hurt yourselves in such rapid swimming?"

"Not at all," said the whirligig. "Ex-

amine this handsome, glittering blueblack uniform I wear. It is really a coat of mail to protect not only our bodies but also our gauzy wings, for we fly as well as swim."

"I shouldn't think you could hop very well," remarked the tree-toad; "your legs look like oars."

"Who wants to hop if he can swim and fly?" retorted the whirligig, with scorn. "I am sure I don't."

"Come, come," cried the other whirligigs, who were swimming by. "Don't spend the day talking when there is racing to be done."

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Tree-toad. There comes that skater again so I will be gone," and off whisked the beetle.

"Now that was interesting," said the Hyla to himself. "I really ought to know something more of my neighbours. There comes a Water-Spider * for a bubble. Now I must ask her what she does with it.

"Good-morning, Mistress Spider. What are you going to do with that silver bubble, may I ask?"

* Found in England.

"Good-morning," replied Mrs. Spider, as she snatched a bubble of air and held it with her hind legs. "I haven't time to explain up here, Mr. Tree-Toad, but if you will call at my home I will be glad to tell you."

"I shall be most happy," replied the Hyla, slipping into the water in a jiffy, and in a second later he was resting on the bottom of the pool, just under Mrs. Water Spider's glittering balloon.

"That certainly is very beautiful, Mrs. Spider. Would you mind explaining how it is done?" said he.

"Not at all," said the spider, as she came and sat in the door of her home. "My house, sir, is woven of silk, just as are those of other spiders, but instead of a web I weave this egg-shaped nest with the door at the bottom. Now, although I live under water, I breathe air, and it is necessary for me to fill my house with it. So up to the top I go and catch a bubble of air with the hairs of my abdomen and my two hinder legs. I then bring it down here and hang it in my silken balloon until it is, as you see, a glittering, transparent bell.

In the top of my nest I weave a little chamber in which to lay my eggs, and when my babies hatch out they stay in this shining home until they are strong enough to build a nest for themselves."

"And how many eggs, Mrs. Spider," asked Hyla, politely, "do you put in the chamber?"

"A hundred is the usual number," replied Mrs. Spider, "but now you really must excuse me, as I am in need of more air."

"Goodness gracious," mused the tree-toad, looking after her as she darted toward the top. "I should think she would feel something like that old woman who lived in a shoe, who had so many children she didn't know what to do. But what have we here?" and Mr. Hyla leaned forward to watch a wee log hut that was creeping in the queerest way on a water-weed.

"Ugh! What great goggle eyes you have!" piped a tiny voice from the door of the hut. "I should like to know what you are staring at."

"Well, this is surprising," gasped the Hyla. "Now, who in the world are you?"

"I am a caddis-worm out for an airing," said the voice again, as the hut reached the edge of the leaf. "I hope you have no objections."

"Oh, no; of course not," stammered the astonished Hyla. "Only I should like to know if all caddis-worms carry their houses about with them?"

"This is my overcoat, I'd have you know," said the caddis, thrusting out his little black head. "My brother wears one of leaves, my sister wears a sand jacket. But mine is the best fit."

"May I ask who is your tailor?" asked the tree-toad. "It is certainly a remarkable coat."

"I am my own tailor," replied the worm. "A caddis would scorn to have his clothes made for him; but it is very hard work, I can assure you of that."

"Would you mind telling me about it?" inquired the Hyla. "Your coat is a perfect fit; there isn't a wrinkle in it."

"Thank you," replied the gratified caddis-worm. "You see," he went on to explain, "we always make our coats out of the material at

hand. Now, when I found these stylish sticks I anchored myself to a stone by a bit of silk which I spun from my mouth, for we caddisworms furnish our own thread. Then by the aid of the same silk I wove this handsome coat, bit by bit, making one section at a time, and then slipping my head through and wriggling it down into place. See, I can put out my head and my first three pairs of feet, and so creep where I will."

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," drawled the toad, who didn't believe a word of it. "And did you say your sister wears a jacket of sand?"

"Oh, yes, that is common enough," answered the caddis. "I have heard that my grandfather, who wore an overcoat of shells, wove into it some tiny ones, each of which was the home of a little living creature, and the poor things had to pick up a living the best way they could. I have also been told that in captivity some of my family have made remarkable coats of gold dust and crushed glass. After a time I shall draw my head back into my overcoat and weave a silk veil, and so shut

myself in and go to sleep. When I wake up I shall no longer be a worm, but a beautiful four-winged fly; my gauzy wings will be delicately fringed and there will be slender antennæ upon my head, and I shall float in the air. Is not that a beautiful future? But here comes a pond-snail, a most interesting fellow. Shall I introduce you?"

"Most happy. I hope you are well," said Mr. Hyla.

But the snail said he wasn't feeling very well, as he had eaten a water-weed that didn't agree with him; still, he was very pleasant and answered all the tree-toad's questions most kindly.

He said the first he could remember he was a little baby-snail not as big as a pinhead, moving about with hundreds of his brothers in the sand. Yet even then he carried a house on his back, a tiny, perfect shell, into which he could creep when danger threatened.

"Some people say I am very slow," said the snail, "but they forget I have only one foot and carry my house on my back. Yet I am not complaining, for I have a head in which

are my eyes, mouth, feelers, and organs of smell, while my relative, the oyster, having no head, has to wear his eyes, ears, and feelers on his mantle and his mouth near his hinge, poor fellow! Even my own cousin, the land-snail, has her eyes on long feelers, and has to draw them in if danger is near. Then see what a handsome cone-shaped shell I wear; inside there is a kind of spiral staircase, up which I can creep, and I can close my door with a thin film. If I break my shell I patch it with a sticky fluid that hardens and makes my home as good as new. I am an air-breathing creature and go up to the top to set free the bubble of impure air I have breathed and then bring down a bubble of fresh, sweet air. I have a long, ribbon-like tongue covered with teeth, with which I can chew the delicious water-weeds. Really, I consider myself a very lucky creature."

"It must be a trifle monotonous," thought the Hyla, as he swam toward the top. "I should want a more stirring life. I wonder what that is!"

What he saw was a small object floating

on the top of the water like an odd little boat, only it seemed made of tiny jars with their openings toward the bottom, and out of these jars were darting wee brown wigglers.

"Hello, little chaps! who are you?" called the tree-toad.

"We don't know, we just got out," cried the wigglers, "but there is our big brother; ask him."

The brother was a curious fellow. His body was very slender and of a mottled green colour, and he had large dark eyes. He also wore a huge moustache, which he was always moving about in a curious way, for he used it as a hand for feeding himself. On one side of his tail was a queer little screw he used as a propeller and rudder. He was sailing about at a furious rate, but almost always on his head, with his tail stuck out of the water.

"Allow me to ask what you are doing in that strange position?" inquired the Hyla in his mildest tones.

"Breathing, sir, as I should think you could see," repied the larva, crossly. "What other way should one breathe?"

"Oh, excuse me," said the tree-toad, as he slipped up to his old seat on the log. "I didn't mean any offence."

"The fact is," said the larva more pleasantly, "I have to go into my pupa case to-morrow and it makes me cross. It is no fun simply to float about without eating. Still, I shall be able to move about, and that is more than many an insect can do as a pupa, and after all it is only for a few days, and then I shall hatch out into a beautiful mosquito."

"Well, well," said the tree-toad, "that will be pleasant. It seems to me I have heard of the mosquito. He is a musician, like myself, is he not?"

"My mother was a fine singer," replied the larva, proudly. "She had beautiful wings, two plume-like antennæ, and six slender legs; and she always carried about with her a case in which there were five lancets to pierce the skin of men and cattle, and she had also a drop of poison to inject into the wound. My father never did anything but fly about in the sunshine and sip honey; my mother was

the talented member of the family. I think I will be going; there come the Giant Water-bugs."

Mrs. Giant Water-bug was swimming quietly along by her husband, who looked very sulky and cross, and did not even return the Hyla's greeting.

"My, my," sighed a water-boatman who was swimming about on his back, "how I do pity Mr. Giant Water-bug! Do not take offence at his not speaking, Hyla; he is simply crushed with his trouble. You see his wife forces him to act as a sort of baby carriage. She fastens her eggs on his back with water-proof glue, although he struggles and struggles to escape her, and he has to carry them about with him everywhere, poor old fellow! Sometimes he is so nearly heartbroken he just hangs to a water-weed and won't move, no matter who tries to get up a fight with him. It is hard on him, for Giant Water-bugs have gay times. They fly away from the pond in such numbers to dance about those great shining balls that hang over the village that men have changed their names to 'electric-light'

bugs. But what a time I have been gossiping here! I think I shall go for a swim."

The tree-toad sat sunning himself on the log, but ever on the outlook for a new acquaintance.

"Faugh!" exclaimed the Hyla at last, "there is one of those horrid things that used to frighten me most out of my wits when I was a timid little polliwog wriggling through the water. She can't hurt me now, so I will speak to her. Good-morning, my friend! May I ask who you are, and where you are going?"

"I am not quite sure either," replied the queer-looking creature as it dragged itself painfully up a water-weed. "I was once a larva much feared in this pool. I fed upon the juiciest polliwogs and other delicacies. But a strange change came over me. I couldn't eat, and I fell half asleep, and to-day I feel that I just *must* climb out of the water; I cannot tell why. I think another change is going to take place in me. So I can only bid the world good-bye. Perhaps this is death." And fixing herself firmly to the weed by means

of two little hooks on each of her six feet she hung perfectly motionless.

"Bless me," gasped the tree-toad, after he had watched the creature patiently for a few minutes. "Her eyes are certainly growing brighter, and what is the matter with her back? A crack, as I am a tree-toad!"

Slowly the queer thing drew herself out of her case. She had a soft body now, and damp, closely-folded wings. But the kind sunshine and the gentle breeze came to help, and, little by little, she began to unfurl her wonderful wings,—great filmy wings that shimmered with blue and green, brown and yellow, delicate pink and violet, and she had large eyes that glittered with twenty thousand facets.

"Oh! oh!" cried the Hyla. "How beautiful you are, you great dragon fly!"

But away she flew without a word, zigzagging back and forth across the pool; a living gem, emerald, sapphire, and topaz, knitting the flecked sunshine with loops of light.

"Well, well," said the tree-toad, "this is the most astonishing thing of all, to think of that ugly larva changing to that beautiful

rainbow fly! But the day is going and I really ought to accomplish something before sunset. So I think I shall take a little trip over to that elm and sing for rain," and off he hopped, leaving the pool sparkling in the sunshine, dappled with cloud-shadows, cool, silent, and sweet with drifting lilies

MR. MAPLE AND MR. PINE

WARREN JUDSON BRIER

ONCE upon a time, many years ago, a little maple seed, with its two gauzy wings, became lodged among the feathers of a wood pigeon, and was by that swift flying bird carried far away into the pine forest. It fell to the ground, and the rains soon beat it into the earth. It was not sorry to get out of sight, for the Pine Family, into whose domain it had been carried, seemed displeased to see it among them. Anyway, they all looked black and threatening to the little seed.

Years afterward there stood upon the spot where the seed had fallen, a hardy tree which we can make no mistake in calling Mr. Rock Maple. In all that part of the forest Mr. Maple had no relatives. As he grew stronger and stronger, the dislike of the Pines, particularly of the Pine boys, grew likewise stronger. As he pushed his limbs farther in every direction, the Pine boys seemed to look more

darkly upon him. They begrudged him the very ground he stood on. The younger Pine boys spread out their arms to try to prevent Rock Maple from getting the light and moisture which he so much needed in that sandy soil. At times they showered great quantities of needles upon him, and at certain seasons of the year they pelted him unmercifully with their cones, sharp rough weapons that played havoc with Mr. Maple's garments of green, yellow and red.

Old Mr. Pine, who waved his green head in the air nearly a hundred and fifty feet above the earth, did not seem to have very good control over his boys, for though he himself did not often deign to pelt Mr. Maple with the few cones he possessed, he never rebuked the boys for their impoliteness.

One day the Pine boys were unusually rough, made so by the strong wind. They knew Mr. Maple was not to blame, but there was no one else to lay the blame on, so they pelted him with cones until he lost his temper. He was just wondering what he would do to prevent the annoyance, when, looking down,

he saw that some little creatures had appeared upon the scene, and were striking right and left at the Pines with a sharp tool, against which needles and cones were of no use whatever.

"How good of those little things to take my part," said Mr. Maple to himself.

In a very short time hundreds of the Pines were lying prone upon the earth. Some were formed into a house, while others were drawn away to a small stream, rolled into its sluggish waters, and soon disappeared forever from the gaze of Mr. Pine, who grieved for them, and of Mr. Maple, who did not.

"Nobody here now of any consequence," exclaimed Mr. Pine with a contemptuous look at Mr. Maple. Mr. Maple paid no attention. "If you were not such a dwarf, I'd talk to you sometimes, even if you *don't* amount to much," he finally said with an air of great condescension. "It makes me hoarse to talk down so far."

For a long time after that Mr. Maple kept silent, wondering why Mr. Pine and himself had been spared.

But great surprises were in store for these two enemies. A family came to live in the log house, and among them was the smallest human being that the trees had ever seen,—a little girl named Camilla. She soon got into the habit of coming out and playing under the two large trees.

One day her father brought home a small box, at sight of which she went into a transport of joy, screaming, "My kit, my darling kit! I never thought to see you again!" The box was soon opened, and she lifted a queer-shaped little instrument from it; then, taking it by its long neck, she drew a small wand across it, and it gave forth a sound that thrilled every fibre of both Pine and Maple through and through.

It is too long a story to tell how both trees came to love Camilla very dearly; how delighted Mr. Pine was when she took some resin which he held out to her; how pleased Camilla looked, how white were her teeth, and how she loved him for the gift; how Mr. Maple had his reward when the passing frost touched him and gave him a beautiful gar-

ment, much to the delight of Little Camilla, or how when the long winter was nearly done the little violinist fairly hugged him for the sugar he had yielded her.

A fatal day came at last. Men appeared with sharp axes and heavy wagons and attacked Mr. Maple. They had not cut into him very deeply before one of them exclaimed to the others, "Curly Maple, as I live!"

Mr. Pine laughed, but before night he had met the same fate. The man who felled him remarked to the others, "Well on to ten thousand feet in that old fellow!"

Camilla looked on while the trees were loaded and drawn away, tears filling her blue eyes. "Good-bye, old friends," she exclaimed.

Away to a noisy place they went. Soon they were cut up into small strips by a monster with very sharp teeth. These strips were carried in different directions, some of the best pieces being loaded upon cars and hurried away to a distant city. From this place they took a long journey in the deep, dark hold of a great ship; again upon the cars, until at last they rested in a dry house.

One day one of the Maple boards and one of the Pine boards were taken out, carefully inspected and then made smooth and even on the outside. Then a skilful workman cut them up into small pieces, and made them into curious shapes. He took great pains not to leave the scratch of knife or chisel upon any of the pieces. He finally glued them all together, and behold, they were of the same shape as Camilla's kit, but somewhat larger.

The workman explained to an observer, "I use pine for the front, or sounding-board, as it is light and vibrant. The more porous it is the better. Maple is the best wood I can get for the other parts, because it is so dense, vibrates slowly, and holds the vibrations made by the pine for a long time, thus prolonging the sound."

After the slow process of finishing and varnishing was completed the violin was placed in a dark box, and there it lay for a long time.

Pine and Maple said little to each other. They were not very comfortable nor very happy. The strings that had been stretched over them were very cruel and pressed upon

the Pine, which pressed upon the soundpost, and that pressed upon the Maple. Sometimes a string broke, and gave them temporary relief, but soon some one would come and put on another.

After passing through two or three small stores the violin finally came to rest in a large one, in a city distant from the one in which it had been made, and all was quiet for a long time. Still Pine and Maple said but little to each other. Shut up in their dark box they didn't feel very cheerful.

"A living death, this!" grumbled Pine.

"We must make the best of it," replied Maple.

One evening a stranger came into the store and asked, "Have you a first-class violin in stock?"

"Yes, just one. I got it several months ago by the merest chance. We don't keep such instruments usually," said the dealer, taking out the violin. "It is wonderful for an instrument not ten years old."

"I want one for the evening, only," said the stranger. "Madame Camilla is here in the

city, and to-night plays for the Orphans' Home. One of her violins is under treatment, and her Cremona has been broken."

"Madame Camilla!" exclaimed Pine, with a quiver of delight.

"Can it be our little Camilla?" asked Maple in a trembling voice.

In a few minutes the violin was taken from its case by Camilla's own hand. She ran her fingers gently over the strings, looked at the varnish, tightened the bow and rosined it carefully and finally placed the violin against her shoulder, and drew the bow smoothly across the strings.

She played an air in which the coming of a storm was represented, and Pine and Maple heard once more the sighing of the wind as it once had swept through their branches.

"That's the sound of the wind in the pine and maple that stood near my log cabin home when I was a little girl," said the musician to the people standing near.

Then for the first time both Pine and Maple felt certain that this was really their Camilla.

The curtain rose, the manager stepped to the front and in a few words explained the accident, and stated that a new and untried violin must be used.

"Let us lay aside all discord, and act in perfect harmony to-night," said the forgiving Maple.

"I'll do it," answered Pine, more cheerfully than he had ever spoken before.

Pine and Maple beat and throbbed under the wonderful strokes and long-drawn sweeps of the bow. When the piece was finished a storm of applause burst upon them like a tempest. Again the curtain went up and the violin found itself in the glare of the foot-lights once more. This time the performer touched the strings gently, and played a tune that many people who had come to the store had tried to play, the words to the first line being, "Way down upon de Suwanee Ribber."

When it was finished the people were silent, and tears glistened in many eyes.

"Maple, forgive me," said the now humble Pine. "I've learned a great lesson, though a

very simple one. The best results in life are accomplished through harmony and not through discord."

"We'll live in harmony hereafter," said Maple.

The great soul of the artist had breathed into the instrument and made it glorious.

A GARDEN OF EASTER STORIES

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Thomas Edward Brown, 1830-1897

THE EASTER RABBIT

German Legend

SHRILL and sharp North Wind whistled through the forest where the trees and flowers were patiently awaiting the arrival of My Lady Spring. Jack Frost was delighted. Perched on the topmost branches of the great trees he laughed gleefully. "Ha! ha! ha! surely Old Father Winter has forgotten that April is almost here," said he. "I shall not remind him, not I. They say My Lady Spring who is waiting in Wild-Flower Hollow is growing most impatient!"

"And so am I," whispered Mother Maple to her neighbour Dame Oak. "I've told my babies many pleasant stories about My Lady Spring and her companion Merry Sunshine. I'm afraid I shall be unable to keep them in their dark cradles much longer."

"Oh! do hold them back a few days," said Dame Oak. "You remember what trouble that rude rollicking fellow Jack-Frost made

last year. So long as he is here he insists on playing with all the babies of the forest. I do wish Lady Spring would come and tell him to be off."

"He'll never go so long as his bold brother North Wind remains," sighed Silver Beech.

"Never mind," said Dame Oak. "I feel sure we shall not have to wait much longer. Indeed I saw Merry Sunshine dancing near the edge of the forest yesterday. I feel quite hopeful."

"Oh, how happy I shall be to hear Thrush's song again," said Silver Beech.

"And the happy children's voices! They haven't been to the forest since nutting season," said Dame Oak. "I'm sure they are longing to come again."

For some time Lady Spring had been waiting in Wild-Flower Hollow near the edge of the forest. Only a few days ago the children had come there to gather flowers.

"Not a bird or blossom anywhere. See how brown and bare that bank is!" said one.

"And Easter is almost here. I wonder why Lady Spring is so late!" said another.

"Maybe she has forgotten us," said a tiny companion.

"I am very disappointed. Last year at this time that bank was blue with violets. Come, let us go home!" And away ran the children.

"I shall wait no longer," said Lady Spring. "Come, Merry Sunshine."

Away danced Merry Sunshine and Lady Spring followed in trailing robes of green and white.

Waving her silver wand over the bank of Wild-Flower Hollow she whispered, "Ready, Violets; come, Starry Bluet; my sweet Anemone, you need wait no longer. Ah, brave Arbutus, I see you were expecting me. Did you think I was never coming, my dainty Spring Beauty?"

How graceful Lady Spring looked waving her magic wand here and there through the forest. Wherever she stooped and touched the brown earth the fresh grass leaped forth; when she tapped the great tree trunks the bare branches above instantly veiled themselves in tender green. She waved at the brooklet and away it ran over the moss and pebbles.

"Sing, Merry Sunshine, dance and sing!" Lady Spring called to her companion.

Merry Sunshine trilled the gayest song. It rang sweetly through forest and echoed far away over the hills to the South where the birds were waiting patiently for the call. How gladly they came! Bluebird and Bobolink, Cardinal and Chickadee, Blackbird and Thrush and Wren,—all the forest warblers answered Merry Sunshine's Song of Spring.

"At last my work is done!" said Lady Spring joyously.

"When are the children coming?" asked Dame Oak.

"Oh, to be sure! I must not forget to send them word that I am here. Robin Redbreast, will you take a message of Spring to the children? I'm sure they will want to see the lovely blossoms and hear the sweet birds' songs."

"Lady Spring," said Robin, "I'm afraid I cannot go to-day. You see my mate and I are building a soft warm nest in Oak-Tree. We are very late this year."

"To be sure, Robin. I wonder where I can find a messenger."

"I think Red Fox would go for you," answered Robin Redbreast. "See, here he comes now."

"Will you take word to the children that I have come, Reynard?" asked Lady Spring.

"Oh, I should be glad to go, but the people might think I came to steal their chickens. I believe Black Bear would be a better messenger than any of us. I'll run and ask him to go."

But Reynard brought back the answer that Black Bear was afraid he would frighten the children too much.

"What shall I do for a messenger," sighed Lady Spring.

Robin cocked his head on one side and looked very thoughtful. Then he said, "I have it, I believe Bunny Rabbit would go; I saw him hop past but a moment ago. I'll call him."

At Robin's whistle Bunny came leaping out of the bushes.

"Bunny Rabbit, I want you to take a message to the children in the city. Please go and tell them Spring has come."

"A message to the city, Lady Spring!" exclaimed Bunny, raising his ears upright. "Please ask me to do anything but that! Dear me! The dogs might catch me! They bark so fiercely! And naughty boys might chase me! I'm sure I should never come back!" Bunny dropped his voice and looked quickly about in all directions. Lady Spring was puzzled.

"Bunny," said Robin, "couldn't you go at night? You know the dogs and boys go to sleep then and you can hop so softly that I'm sure they would not hear you. Besides, your ears are very sharp."

"Well, perhaps I could go at midnight," said Bunny, thoughtfully. "But how could I take a message to the children without wakening them?"

"Oh, I can manage that," said Lady Spring. "Meet me in Wild-Flower Hollow a little before twelve o'clock. Then you shall know all about my plan."

"I will come," said Bunny.

Lady Spring made a beautiful basket out of twigs and leaves and grasses. She lined it with the softest moss. Around the top she placed a garland of choicest wild flowers. And, when the birds knew that she was sending a message to the children, each one wished to help her. So they sent lovely little eggs of all colours—greenish blue, brown, white and spotted. How beautiful they looked lying on the bed of moss wreathed with flowers.

A little before midnight Bunny came to Wild-Flower Hollow.

"I am ready," said Lady Spring. "See, Bunny, here is plenty of moss. Do be careful with these precious eggs. When you come to a house where a little child lives take out a bit of moss and form it into a wee nest like this," said Lady Spring, weaving quickly a moss nest. "Then put into each one a wild flower and an egg,—so. Leave an egg for each child in the house."

"Yes, yes, I understand, Lady Spring," said Bunny. "How pretty the nest is!"

Off he started as gaily as could be.

On Easter morning Merry Sunshine wakened the children early.

"See! see! I found this little moss nest on the door-step," cried one of them. "Here is a wild-flower! And see,—three coloured eggs!"

"An egg for each of us!" said another. "I wonder what it means."

"I know, I know," said little brother. "There are Bunny tracks on the path. He must have brought the nest to us. Perhaps he came to tell us Spring is here."

"Of course he did!" cried the children, clapping their tiny hands in glee. "Bunny was Spring's messenger."

Away to the woods ran the children, crying out, "Spring is here, Spring is here. Bunny Rabbit brought us the message."

THE BOY WHO DISCOVERED THE SPRING *

RAYMOND MACDONALD ALDEN

THERE came once a little Elf Boy to live on this earth, and he was so much pleased with it that he stayed, never caring to go back to his own world. I do not know where his own world was, or just how he came to leave it. Some thought that he was dropped by accident from some falling star, and some that he had flown away, thinking that he could fly back again whenever he chose, because he did not know that children always lose their wings when they come into this world. But no one knew certainly, as he never told any one; and, after all, it did not matter, since, as I have already said, he liked the earth so much that he did not care to leave it.

There was a Hermit who lived in the valley

* From "Why the Chimes Rang," by Raymond MacDonald Alden. Copyright 1908. Used by special permission of The Bobbs-Merrill Co.

where the little Boy had first come, and, as he had a room in his house for a visitor, he took him in, and they grew to like each other so well that again the little Boy did not care to go away, nor did the Hermit care to have him. The Hermit had not always been a Hermit, but he had become a sorrowful man, and did not care to live where other people lived, or to share any of their pleasures. The reason he had become a sorrowful man was that his only child had died, and it seemed to him that there was nothing worth living for after that. So he moved to the lonely valley, and I suppose would have spent the rest of his life by himself, if it had not been for the little Elf Boy.

It was a very lovely valley, with great, green meadows that sloped down to a rippling brook, and in summer-time were full of red and white and yellow blossoms. Over the brook there hung green trees, whose roots made pleasant places to rest when one was tired; and along the water's edge there grew blue flowers, while many little frogs and other live creatures played there. It was summer-time when the little Elf Boy came, and the flowers and the

trees and the brook and the frogs made him very happy. I think that in the world from which he came they did not have such things: it was made chiefly of gold and silver and precious stones, instead of things that grow and blossom and keep one company. So the Elf Boy was very happy. He did not ask to go to play in the village over the hill, but was quite content with the meadows and the brook-side. The only thing that did not please him was that the old Hermit still remained sorrowful, thinking always of his child who had died and this the Elf Boy did not understand, for in the world from which he came nothing ever died, and he thought it strange that if the Hermit's child had died he did not patiently wait for him to come back again.

So the summer went merrily on, and the Elf Boy learned to know the names of all the flowers in the meadow, and to love them dearly. He also became so well acquainted with the birds that they would come to him for crumbs, and sit on the branches close by to sing to him; the frogs would do the same thing, and although the Elf Boy did not think

their voices as sweet as those of the birds, he was too polite to let them know it.

But when September came, there began to be a sad change. The first thing the Elf Boy noticed was that the birds began to disappear from the meadows. When he complained of this, the Hermit told him they had gone to make their visit to the Southland, and would come back again; and this he easily believed. But as time went on, and the air became more and more still as the last of them took their flight, he began to lose heart.

What was worse, at the same time the flowers began to disappear from the meadows. They were dead, the Hermit said, and in this way the Elf Boy learned what that meant. At first others came to take their places, and he tried to learn to like the flowers of autumn as well as those which he had known first. But as these faded and dropped off, none came after them. The mornings grew colder, and the leaves on the trees were changing in a strange way. When they grew red and yellow, instead of green, the Elf Boy thought it was a queer thing for them to put on different

colours, and wondered how long it would last. But when they began to fall, he was very sad indeed. At last there came a day when every limb was bare, except for a few dried leaves at the top of one of the tallest trees. The Elf Boy was almost broken-hearted.

One morning he went out early to see what new and dreadful thing had happened in the night, for it seemed now that every night took something beautiful out of the world. He made his way toward the brook, but when he reached the place where he usually heard it calling to him as it ran merrily over the stones, he could not hear a sound. He stopped and listened, but everything was wonderfully still. Then he ran as fast as his feet would carry him to the border of the brook. Sure enough, it had stopped running. It was covered with a hard sheet of ice.

The Elf Boy turned and went to the Hermit's house. By the time he had reached it, the tears were running down his cheeks.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked the Hermit.

"The brook is dead," said the Elf Boy.

"I think not," said the Hermit. "It is frozen over, but that will not hurt it. Be patient, and it will sing to you again."

"No," said the Elf Boy. "You told me that the birds would come back, and they have not come. You told me that the trees were not dead, but their leaves have every one gone, and I am sure they are. You told me that the flowers had seeds that did not die, but would make other flowers but I can not find them, and the meadow is bare and dark. Even the grass is not green any more. It is a dead world. In the summer-time I did not see how you could be sorrowful; but now I do not see how any one can be happy."

The Hermit thought it would be of no use to try to explain anything more to the Elf Boy, so he said again, "Be patient," and tried to find some books in which he could teach the Boy to read, and make him forget the outside world.

The next time they went for a walk to the village over the hill, the Elf Boy was very curious to see whether the same thing had happened there that had happened in their

valley. Of course it had: the trees there seemed dead, too, and the flowers were all gone from the door-yards. The Boy expected that every one in the village would now be as sorrowful as the Hermit, and he was very much surprised when he saw them looking as cheerful as ever. There were some boys playing on the street-corner, who seemed to be as happy as boys could be. One of them spoke to the Elf Boy, and he answered:

"How can you play so happily, when such a dreadful thing has happened to the world?"

"Why, what has happened?"

"The flowers and trees are dead," said the Elf Boy, "the birds are gone, and the brook is frozen, and the meadow is bare and grey. And it is so on this side of the hill also."

Then the boys in the street laughed merrily, and did not answer the Elf Boy, for they remembered that he was a stranger in the world, and supposed he would not understand if they should try to talk to him. And he went on through the village, not daring to speak to any others, but all the time wondering that the people could still be so happy.

As the winter came on, the Hermit taught him many things from the books in his house, and the Elf Boy grew interested in them and was not always sad. When the snow came he found ways to play in it, and even saw that the meadow was beautiful again, though in a different way from what it had been in summer. Yet still he could not think the world by any means so pleasant a place as it had been in the time of flowers and birds; and if it were not that he had become very fond of the Hermit, who was now the only friend he could remember, he would have wished to go back to the world from which he had come. It seemed to him now that the Hermit must miss him very much if he should go away, since they two were the only people who seemed really to understand how sorrowful a place the earth is.

So the weeks went by. One day in March, as he and the Hermit sat at their books, drops of water began to fall from the eaves of the roof, and they saw that the snow was melting in the sunshine.

"Do you want to take a little walk down to-

ward the brook?" asked the Hermit. "I should not wonder if I could prove to you to-day that it has not forgotten how to talk to you."

"Yes," said the Elf Boy, though he did not think the Hermit could be right. It was months since he had cared to visit the brook, it made him so sad to find it still and cold.

When they reached the foot of the hillside the sheet of ice was still there, as he had expected.

"Never mind," said the Hermit. "Come out on the ice with me, and put down your ear and listen."

So the Elf Boy put down his ear and listened; and he heard, as plainly as though there were no ice between, the voice of the brook gurgling in the bottom of its bed. He clapped his hands for joy.

"It is waking up, you see," said the Hermit. "Other things will waken too, if you will be patient."

The Elf Boy did not know quite what to think, but he waited day after day with his eyes and ears wide open to see if anything else

might happen; and wonderful things did happen all the time. The brook sang more and more distinctly, and at last broke through its cold coverlet and went dancing along in full sight. One morning, while the snow was still around the house, the Elf Boy heard a chirping sound, and looking from his window, saw a red robin outside asking for his breakfast.

"Why," cried the Boy, "have you really come back again?"

"Certainly," said the robin, "don't you know it is almost spring?"

But the Elf Boy did not understand what he said.

There was a pussy-willow growing by the brook, and the Boy's next discovery was that hundreds of little grey buds were coming out. He watched them grow bigger from day to day, and while he was doing this the snow was melting away in great patches where the sun shone warmest on the meadow, and the blades of grass that came up into the daylight were greener than anything the Elf Boy had ever seen.

Then the pink buds came on the maple

trees, and unfolded day by day. And the fruit trees in the Hermit's orchard were as white with blossoms as they had lately been with snow.

"Not a single tree is dead," said the Elf Boy.

Last of all came the wild flowers—blue and white violets near the brook, dandelions around the house, and a little later, yellow buttercups all over the meadow. Slowly but steadily the world was made over, until it glowed with white and green and gold.

The Elf Boy was wild with joy. One by one his old friends came back, and he could not bear to stay in the house for many minutes from morning to night. Now he knew what the wise Hermit had meant by saying, "Be patient," and he began to wonder again that the Hermit could be sorrowful in so beautiful a world.

One morning the church bells in the village —whose ringing was the only sound that ever came from the village over the hill—rang so much longer and more joyfully than usual, that the Elf Boy asked the Hermit why they did

so. The Hermit looked in one of his books, and answered:

"It is Easter Day. The village people celebrate it on one Sunday every spring."

"May we not go also?" asked the Elf Boy, and as it was the first time he had ever asked to go to the village, the Hermit could not refuse to take him.

The village was glowing with flowers. There were many fruit trees, and they, too, were in bloom. Every one who passed along the street seemed either to wear flowers or to carry them in his hand. The people were all entering the churchyard; and here the graves, which had looked so grey and cold when the Hermit and the Boy had last seen them, were beautiful with flowers that the village people had planted or had strewn over them for Easter.

The people all passed into the church. But the Hermit and the Elf Boy, who never went where there was a crowd, stayed outside where the humming-birds and bees were flying happily among the flowers. Suddenly there came from the church a burst of music. To

the Elf Boy it seemed the most beautiful sound he had ever heard. He put his finger on his lip to show the Hermit that he wanted to listen. These were the words they sang:

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore!"

The Boy took hold of the Hermit's hand and led him to the church door, that they might hear still better. He was very happy.

"Oh," he cried, "I do not believe that anything ever really dies."

The Hermit looked down at him and smiled.

"Perhaps not," he said.

When the music began again, a strange thing happened. The Hermit sang the Easter song with the others. It was the first time he had sung for many years.

All silently, and soft as sleep,
The snow fell, flake on flake.
Slumber, spent Earth, and dream of flowers,
Till springtime bids you wake.
Again the deadened bough shall bend
With blooms of sweetest breath.
Oh, miracle of miracles,
This life that follows death!

SHEEP AND LAMBS

KATHARINE TYNAN

All in the April morning
April airs were abroad,
The sheep with their little lambs,
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road;
All in an April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak human cry,
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

All in the April evening
April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

ROBIN REDBREAST—A CHRIST LEGEND *

SELMA LAGERLÖF

IT happened one day when our Lord sat in His Paradise creating and painting little birds that He conceived the idea of making a little grey bird.

"Remember your name is Robin Redbreast," said our Lord to the bird, as soon as it was finished. Then He held it in the palm of His open hand and let it fly.

After the bird had been testing his wings a while, and had seen something of the beautiful world in which he was destined to live, he became curious to see what he himself was like. He noticed that he was entirely grey, and that his breast was just as grey as all the rest of him. Robin Redbreast twisted and turned in all directions as he viewed himself in the mirror of a clear lake, but he couldn't

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find a single red feather. Then he flew back to our Lord.

Our Lord sat there on His throne, big and gentle. Out of His hands came butterflies that fluttered about His head; doves cooed on His shoulders; and out of the earth beneath Him grew the rose, the lily, and the daisy.

The little bird's heart beat heavily with fright, but with easy curves he flew nearer and nearer our Lord, till at last he rested on our Lord's hand. Then our Lord asked what the little bird wanted. "I only wish to ask you about one thing," said the little bird. "What is it you wish to know?" said our Lord. "Why should I be called Redbreast, when I am all grey from the bill to the very end of my tail? Why am I called Redbreast when I do not possess one single red feather?" The bird looked beseechingly on our Lord with his tiny black eyes—then turned his head. About him he saw pheasants all red under a sprinkle of gold dust, parrots with marvellous red neckbands, cocks with red combs, to say nothing about the butterflies, the goldfinches, and the roses! And naturally he thought how

little he needed—just one tiny drop of colour on his breast and he, too, would be a beautiful bird, and his name would fit him. "Why should I be called Redbreast when I am so entirely grey?" asked the bird once again, and waited for our Lord to say: "Ah, my friend, I see that I have forgotten to paint your breast feathers red, but wait a moment and it shall be done."

But our Lord only smiled a little and said: "I have called you Robin Redbreast, and Robin Redbreast shall your name be, but you must look to it that you yourself earn your red breast feathers." Then our Lord lifted His hand and let the bird fly once more—out into the world.

The bird flew down into Paradise, meditating deeply.

What could a little bird like him do to earn for himself red feathers? The only thing he could think of was to make his nest in a brier bush. He built it in among the thorns in the close thicket. It looked as if he waited for a rose leaf to cling to his throat and give him colour.

After many years there dawned a new day, one that will long be remembered in the world's history. On the morning of this day Robin Redbreast sat upon a little naked hillock outside of Jerusalem's walls, and sang to his young ones, who rested in a tiny nest in a brier bush.

Robin Redbreast told the little ones all about that wonderful day of creation, and how the Lord had given names to everything, just as each Redbreast had told it ever since the first Redbreast had heard God's word, and gone out of God's hand. "And mark you," he ended sorrowfully, "so many years have gone, so many roses have bloomed, so many little birds have come out of their eggs since Creation Day, but Robin Redbreast is still a little grey bird. He has not yet succeeded in gaining his red feathers."

The little young ones opened wide their tiny bills, and asked if their forebears had never tried to do any great thing to earn the priceless red colour.

"We have all done what we could," said the

little bird, "but we have all gone amiss. Even the first Robin Redbreast met one day another bird exactly like himself, and he began immediately to love it with such a mighty love that he could feel his breast turn. 'Ah!' he thought then, 'now I understand! It was our Lord's meaning that I should love with so much ardour that my breast should grow red in colour from the very warmth of the love that lives in my heart.' But he missed it, as all those who came after him have missed it, and as even you shall miss it."

The little young ones twittered, utterly bewildered, and already began to mourn because the red colour would not come to beautify their little, downy grey breasts.

"We had also hoped that song would help us," said the grown-up bird, speaking in long-drawn-out tones—"the first Robin Redbreast sang until his heart swelled within him, he was so carried away, and he dared to hope anew. 'Ah!' he thought, 'it is the glow of the song which lives in my soul that will colour my breast feathers red.' But he missed it, as

all the others have missed it and as even you shall miss it." Again was heard a sad "peep" from the young ones' half-naked throats.

"We had also counted on our courage and our valour," said the bird. "The first Robin Redbreast fought bravely with other birds, until his breast flamed with the pride of conquest. 'Ah!' he thought, 'my breast feathers shall become red from the love of battle which burns in my heart.' He, too, missed it, as all those who came after him have missed it, and as even you shall miss it." The little young ones peeped courageously that they still wished to try and win the much-sought-for prize, but the bird answered them sorrowfully that it would be impossible. What could they do when all other robins had missed the mark? What could they do more than love, sing, and fight? What could—the little bird stopped short, for out of one of the gates of Jerusalem came a crowd of people marching, and the whole procession rushed toward the hillock, where the bird had its nest. There were riders on proud horses, soldiers with long spears, executioners with nails and

hammers. There were judges and priests in the procession, weeping women, and above all a mob of mad, loose people running about—a filthy, howling mob of loiterers.

The little grey bird sat trembling on the edge of his nest. He feared each instant that the little brier bush would be trampled down and his young ones killed!

"Be careful!" he cried to the little defenceless young ones. "Creep together and remain quiet. Here comes a horse that will ride right over us! Here comes a warrior with iron-shod sandals! Here comes the whole wild, storming mob!" Immediately the bird ceased his cry of warning and grew calm and quiet. He almost forgot the danger hovering over him. Finally he hopped down into the nest and spread his wings over the young ones.

"Oh! this is too terrible," said he. "I don't wish you to witness this awful sight! There are three miscreants who are going to be crucified!" And he spread his wings so that the little ones could see nothing.

Robin Redbreast followed the whole spectacle with his eyes, which grew big with terror.

He could not take his glance from the three unfortunates.

"How terrible!" said the bird after a little while. "They have placed a crown of piercing thorns upon the head of one of them. I see that the thorns have wounded his brow so that the blood flows," he continued. "And this man is so beautiful, and looks about him with such mild glances that every one ought to love him. I feel as if an arrow were shooting through my heart, when I see him suffer!"

The little bird began to feel a stronger and stronger pity for the thorn-crowned sufferer. "Oh! if I were only my brother the eagle," thought he, "I would draw the nails from his hands, and with my strong claws I would drive away all those who harm him!" He saw how the blood trickled down from the brow of the Crucified One, and he could no longer remain quiet in his nest. "Even if I am little and weak, I can still do something for this poor suffering one," thought the bird. Then he left his nest and flew out into the air, striking wide circles around the Crucified One. He flew around him several times with-

out daring to approach, for he was a shy little bird, who had never dared to go near a human being. But little by little he gained courage, flew close to him, and drew with his little bill a thorn that had become imbedded in the brow of the Crucified One. And as he did this there fell on his breast a drop of blood from the face of the Crucified One;—it spread quickly and floated out and coloured all the little fine breast feathers.

Then the Crucified One opened his lips and whispered to the bird: "Because of thy compassion, thou hast won all that thy kind have been striving after, ever since the world was created."

As soon as the bird had returned to his nest his young ones cried to him: "Thy breast is red! Thy breast feathers are redder than the roses!"

And even unto this day the blood-red colour shines on every Robin Redbreast's throat and breast.

THE MAPLE SEED

ON the topmost twig of a maple tree there grew a seed. In the springtime the gentle movement of the sap and the soft rustle of the leaves whispering among themselves had awakened him; then, day by day, half sleeping and half conscious, he had fed upon what the roots provided, stretching himself lazily in the sunshine. Presently his wing began to unfold.

"That is very curious," said he, stirring a little. "It must be a mistake. I don't flutter about like the bees." That bit of wing, which seemed his and not his, puzzled him. "It must belong to something else," he thought. And afterward he was always on the lookout for a bee or a dragon fly with only one wing. But none came.

The hot summer noons and the long moonlit nights became sultrier and the leaves dropped. "How withered I am!" said the seed to his

most intimate friend, a leaf that hung from a near bough. "It makes me feel quite brittle." But the leaf did not answer, for just then it fell from the twig with a queer, reluctant shiver to the ground.

"Ah!" murmured the maple seed, "I understand." So he was not surprised when a rude breeze twisted him off one day, and sent him spinning into space.

"Here I go," thought he, "and this is the end of it."

"Puff!" said the breeze, who had seen much of the world, and looked with contempt upon the untravelled. "Puff! how ignorant!" and he blew the seed right into a crack in the earth.

"It must be the end, for all that," insisted the seed. No wonder he thought so, for it was cold and dark where he lay. A troubled cloud leaned down and wept over him. Then he began to grow amazingly in the warmth and moisture.

"If this goes on," he thought, "I shall certainly burst, and then I must die. How is one to live, with a crack in his sides?"

But the maple seed was wrong. He did

not die. An unsuspected, mysterious strength sustained him. His roots found food in the brown earth, and he lifted up a slender stem into the pure sunlight and warm air. Through spring, summer, autumn and winter, year after year, this lived and grew, until the tiny sapling had become a beautiful tree, with spreading branches.

"Ah!" said the tree, "how stupid I was."

It was very pleasant on the lawn. An old couple from the house near by came out in good weather to sit under the tree. They reminded him of some fragile leaves he had seen fluttering somewhere in the past. He was glad to have them come, and he kept his coolest shade for them. Partly for their sakes, he liked to have the robins sing in his branches.

The years went by. The old man tottered out alone to sit in the cool shadow. He was bent and sorrowful.

"Ah!" sighed the tree, "I know! I know! He has lost his leaf, and feels brittle. If I could only tell him this is not the end!"

After this, many sunny days came, but not the old man, and the tree concluded that he

had been blown away. "If he only knew that he would grow again!" he said to himself. "Unless one knows that, it is so uncomfortable to lie in the dark."

A great storm came. The sky blackened, the winds blew with might, and the heavy rain fell. The maple was uprooted and broken. The next day there came men with axes who cut the tree in pieces, and drew it to the house.

"Is this the end?" he questioned. But no, —the logs were piled one day in the fireplace in a large, sunny room. The old man leaned from his chair to warm his hands by the cheerful heat the crimson flame gave out. "Is it the maple?" he said. "Ah! this goes with the rest."

The fire grew brighter, burned duller, turned to embers, smouldered to ashes. The hearth was cold. The figure was sitting still in the armchair, but the old man himself had gone away.

The spirit of the maple whispered, "Does he know? There is *no* end."

WHY THE IVY IS ALWAYS GREEN *

MADGE BINGHAM

THERE were once two small plants that grew on the edge of a rough, red ditch. One of them was an ivy plant and the other a tiny fig tree.

It was early in the morning when they first awoke and looked around to see how they liked the world.

"I think it is an ugly old world," said the young fig tree. "I see only a rough, red ditch with dirty water flowing below."

"Oh, it is a beautiful world," replied the ivy vine. "I see clouds floating on high, and sunshine, and such lovely trees and flowers growing over on the other side of the ditch! Let us try to make this side beautiful, too.

"I will cover the rough, red places with pretty, green leaves, and you can decorate

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with your wonderful pink blossoms. Come, let us try."

"No," said the small fig tree, "I would not waste my time trying to make this ugly old place beautiful.

"Now if, like my mother, I could have grown in the soft, rich earth of the garden, I would have tried to do something, but here there is no use."

So, from day to day, the little fig tree grumbled. Nothing pleased her. If the sun shone she said it was too hot; if the rain fell she said it was too wet; and if the wind blew she said it was too cold.

But with the little ivy vine it was very different, and she was as happy as a lark from early morning until night.

"Whether the sun shines or whether the rains fall, it is God's will," said the little vine, "and I am well pleased. I shall do all I can to make my side of this ditch beautiful, and I shall begin to-day."

And so she did. Though she lived only on the edge of the red ditch, she spread out her leaves day by day, running here and there and

yonder, hiding this red spot and that red spot, until by and by nothing could be seen but the beautiful green leaves of the ivy, and she did not stop until every ugly spot was hidden by her graceful garlands.

"Oh, it is beautiful, beautiful, now," cried the ivy; "only look!"

"Yes," said the fig tree, crossly, "but no one sees it. What are you going to do now? Dry up, I suppose, since you can never cross the ditch."

"Oh, but I shall cross the ditch," said the ivy vine. "I shall keep on trying until I do. There is so much on the other side I can do to help make the earth-world beautiful. Surely there is a way to cross."

So she ran out little tendrils, reaching here and there, searching everywhere for a way to cross the ditch. And at last, by climbing down to the edge of the muddy water, she reached a rock half way across, where she stopped for a moment to rest and wonder what next to do.

"You'll never get across," laughed the fig tree. "I told you so! You might as well

make up your mind to dry up and stop trying."

"I shall never stop trying," called back the ivy vine. "There is a way to cross all ditches, and I shall cross this one. Wait and see."

"Bravo, my pretty one!" said the voice of the old oak tree close by. "Cling to my roots there. I am old and worn, but it is a joy to help one like you; reach out and I will pull you up."

So with one huge stretch the ivy vine clung tightly to the twisted roots of the old oak, and was soon laughing merrily on the other side.

"Dear me, but you are a brave little vine," said the old oak. "I have been watching you across the ditch all these months, and you have changed its ugly, red banks into a real thing of beauty.

"Now there was a time, once, when flowers and grasses grew there, and ferns fringed the edge of the brook, and it was beautiful, indeed. Every fall I shook armfuls of crimson and yellow leaves upon the bank, but that was long ago, before the great forest fire which robbed

me of my limbs and leaves and left me old and worn.

"What a joy it would be to me if only I might have my branches decked in leaves one more time,—especially do I long for this in the glad springtime, when trees and flowers are robing themselves for the joyous Easter Day.

"Sad, indeed, it is to me, to know that I shall be clothed no more in a fresh dress of delicate green, like your own pretty leaves, dear Ivy."

"But you shall," said the ivy vine, clapping her hands; "you have helped me cross the ditch to-day, and I mean to give you an Easter dress. Watch me."

Now vines had never climbed high before this. They had only run along the ground and down the hill, and over walls, but this little ivy vine wrapped her delicate arms around the rough bark of the old oak, and began to climb her first tree.

She pulled and stretched, and stretched and pulled, until little by little, up, up, higher and

higher she went, leaving a trail of rich, green leaves behind her. It was a lovely sight.

"See!" she called to the old oak; "I am bringing you a most beautiful Easter dress,—how do you like it?"

"Beautiful, beautiful!" laughed the old oak. "You make me feel young again. But what will you do when you reach my branches?"

"Why, I shall keep on climbing," replied the ivy vine. "When I give a dress at all, it must be a whole dress, don't you know? I shall not stop until I have covered every branch, as I did the bare spots on the ditch."

And so she did. Every day she climbed a little higher, until by and by every limb on the great, old oak was completely hidden by the beautiful leaves of the ivy. The old oak laughed in delight, as she looked on her beautiful Easter dress of fresh, rich green.

Now the queen of the fairies who, I told you, was always on the watch for beautiful deeds, stood under the old oak on Easter Day and wondered at the beautiful sight. It made her glad to see the joy of the old oak in her

new dress, and of course she knew who had given it.

So, turning with a smile to the ivy vine, she said, "Because you have tried to make others happy and to make the earth beautiful your leaves shall never fade. Forever and forever they shall stay beautiful and green. Cold shall not hurt them nor summer's heat destroy them, and wherever you go you shall gladden the hearts of men with your freshness and beauty."

Very happy, indeed, did these words make the pretty ivy vine, and ever since she has been climbing over the earth-world, hunting bare places to make more beautiful.

Stone walls and churches and houses,—no place seems too high for her to climb, and never does she weary in making fresh Easter dresses for the trees that are old and worn and cannot make them for themselves.

JONQUILS

MARGARET DELAND

Blow golden trumpets, sweet and clear,
  Blow soft upon the perfumed air:
Bid the sad earth to join your song,
  "To Christ does victory belong!"

Oh, let the winds your message bear
  To every heart of grief and care:
Sound through the world the joyful lay,
  "Our Christ has conquered Death to-day."

On cloudy wings let glad words fly
  Through the soft blue of echoing sky:
Ring out,—O trumpets, sweet and clear,
  "Through Death, immortal Life is here!"

WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM

MARY STEWART

MANY years ago, in a rocky cave half way up a steep mountain, there lived a band of robbers. From the mouth of their cave they could look far out over the villages of white houses which dotted the green valley below to the blue waters of the sea beyond, and between the villages and the sea there ran a straight white road. It was there that the robbers waylaid travellers, robbing them of money, bales of rich stuff or jewels, until the band became a terror to the neighbourhood and the very name of Tibeous, their leader, was whispered fearfully among travellers.

One clear bright morning Tibeous climbed down the mountain path alone and mingled, unrecognised, among the villagers. He was young and strong and did not look very differently from the fishermen who, returning

from a night's work, were carrying their nets of shining fish across the beach and through the narrow streets. Only the eyes of Tibeous were as keen and suspicious as those of a wild animal, and often his hand went to his belt where beneath his cloak of skins he carried, for protection this time, a sharp dagger.

Through the streets he walked down to the seashore. There had been heavy rains during the night, and in the morning sunshine the tall beach grass sparkled as if hung with diamonds, the sky was blue and cloudless, and the dancing waves broke merrily upon the glittering beach. Watching the peaceful scene Tibeous forgot for a moment the errand which had drawn him from his safe retreat. By listening, unnoticed, to the talk of the village, he had hoped to learn whether any rich merchants were expected, so that he and his men could be ready to waylay them upon the road. But as he stood upon the beach watching the barefooted boys play in the waves, a picture of his own boyhood rose in his mind. He, too, had lived beside the sea and had helped his fisherman father draw in nets and carry

strings of silvery fish. How happy he had been, he thought, and now for the last five years the sun seemed to have ceased shining in his life. His parents had died, and not content with the small, though honest, living he made at the fishing, he had fallen in with the band of robbers. They soon made him their leader and although younger than any of them, he was a very good one, for he did not know what fear was, was ready for any wild adventure and cared so little for the treasure he risked his life to steal that he divided it up among his followers.

But that golden morning Tibeous had forgotten all this, and as he gazed at a woman walking toward him with a boy clinging to one hand and a baby nestled against her shoulder, he thought only of his own boyhood, and of the mother who had loved and guarded him. So intently was he watching the woman that he did not notice a crowd which was collecting behind him until, warned by a sudden murmur of many voices, he turned sharply, his dagger half drawn. But the men and women had not noticed him, they were all clustering around

a white-robed man, and as Tibeous turned their murmurs died away and they stood motionless, eagerly listening to the voice of the figure in their midst. Tibeous could not see his face, could not at first catch his words, but the tones of the speaker's voice reached him, and like the ripples of the waves and the glimmer of the sunshine they reminded him afresh of his own joyous boyhood.

He saw the little boy's hand tighten in his mother's clasp as he urged her forward, and Tibeous was not surprised; that thrilling voice seemed to draw all toward it and he, too, followed the lad. And then, as they reached the outskirts of the crowd, the men drew back, making a pathway up to the Master, who, Tibeous now saw, was already surrounded with children. The boys and girls were looking up at him admiringly and even the baby in its mother's arms held out its arms, as though to one to whom it belonged.

Again the Master was speaking, and as Tibeous gazed, half startled at that beautiful face, he heard the words:

"Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not

receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

"The kingdom of God," thought Tibeous with a shudder, how far that was from the kingdom of robbers over which he ruled on the wild mountain side. And as far asunder as those two kingdoms was he, an outlaw and a thief, from the gracious white-robed man whose words stirred every heart upon that shining beach.

From that day Tibeous surprised even his own rough followers by his recklessness. He risked capture and death over and over again, attacking travellers in the daytime as well as under cover of the night, robbing not only merchants, but priests and wealthy Pharisees, men whose power was so great that if the band was caught, one word would suffice to hang them all to the nearest trees. But instead of being captured they only made themselves hated and feared more than ever. At length a proclamation went forth promising a large reward to any man who could bring Tibeous a prisoner to Jerusalem. As a warn-

ing to all robbers the thief, if captured, would be crucified outside the city walls.

None knew that since that one glorious morning upon the beach, the pain in the heart of Tibeous had been well-nigh unbearable.

"Such gentle scenes have no place in my wild life," he would cry bitterly to himself, and with the hope of forgetting the picture of the lad in the Master's arms he dashed wildly into every dangerous adventure.

One morning the robber band, looking out from the cave, saw a multitude of people journeying toward the mountain, which sloped down to the far end of the blue sea. Some came by boat, others rode, while many, who seemed to be quite poor people, walked.

What could draw them to that out of the way spot, the robbers wondered, and only Tibeous suspected the truth. They had probably travelled so far to meet again the Master whom he had seen upon the beach. He did not tell the others of his surmise, but when they planned to ride around the landward side of the mountain and rob these people as

they journeyed home, he refused to go with them.

"In any dangerous attack," he said, "I am always ready to lead you, but as to robbing poor men and women and children" . . . he turned away disgusted, while again there rose before him the picture of the mother upon the beach, bringing her children to that marvellous man who talked about the kingdom of God.

Slowly the day passed and the sun sank behind the mountains while Tibeous sat alone, at the entrance of the cave, pondering deeply. He remembered that his mother had often spoken of a King who would some day come into the world, a great Deliverer she had called him, before whom all the nations of the world would bow and called Him blessed.

Tibeous had wondered at times during the last weeks whether the glorious white robed figure could be that King, but this day, as he sat watching the sun sink, he decided that it was impossible.

Beautiful the man was and tender and stirring, but surely, Tibeous thought, no one could

be a King and a Deliverer without courage and strength a thousand times greater than even he, a lion among his followers, possessed. Could that gracious, gentle figure possess such miraculous power? "And yet if I thought for an instant," he murmured, "that that wonderful man was the King of whom my mother dreamed, I would forsake this lawless life and become his loyal follower."

At that moment he saw a dark cloud rising out of the west, the sign of one of the sudden storms which come so often in that country. Quickly it spread across the sky, the waves of the sea grew black and in a few moments they rose high crested with white foam, and the wind tore over them, while above the thunder pealed and the lightning flashed across the darkness.

Tibeous stood in the cave watching intently. "Verily," he exclaimed, "to conquer and subdue his foes, a great Deliverer must have power stronger even than this mighty storm."

A flash of vivid lightning lit up the whole scene, and in the midst of the furious sea Tibeous saw a tiny boat. He saw the des-

perate men within it and guessed at their terror. "Surely," he thought, "the next wave will engulf them," and then walking upon the storm-tossed waters toward the boat he saw a figure, his white robes fluttering in the wind.

Again all was darkness while Tibeous stood before the cave unheeding the torrents of rain which drenched him, his gaze fixed intently upon the sea, longing, almost praying, for the lightning to flash once more and show him again that mysterious figure.

Another flash, and standing in the stern of the boat Tibeous saw the white robed man while the others knelt before him as if in reverence, and then—there was perfect peace. The storm died away, the waves were stilled, and the moon breaking out from behind the jagged clouds, threw its silvery light upon the boat sailing quietly across the sea.

"Even the winds and the waves obey him!" cried Tibeous. "Surely this is the King all powerful, whom I vowed, if I ever found, to follow forever."

Two days later Tibeous was taken prisoner, carried bound to Jerusalem, and thrown into

a dark dungeon. With his usual fearlessness he had searched undisguised, through the villages for the Deliverer, but before he had found the Master he was recognised and captured. Many a weary month he lay in the prison. At times his restless energy drove him almost crazy, and he would rush up and down his narrow cell like a caged beast. At other times, when the first beams of early dawn pierced the narrow slit in the stone wall, which was his only window, or when a silvery ray of moonlight struggled through, the scenes of his wild life seemed blotted out, and he thought only of the Christ, and of his kingdom to which now, alas, he could never belong.

He supposed first it was an earthly kingdom, full of brave soldiers who would fight for the great King, to whom at last all the nations of the world would bow. But one morning, after nearly a year of imprisonment, he was taken out of his dark cell and led, his hands bound with leathern thongs, toward a green hill outside the city walls. Beside him walked another prisoner, a coarse, savage-looking man, well known for his brutal deeds,

and upon the shoulders of each of them was laid a heavy cross. Upon those crosses they were to be crucified.

Tibeous was wan and pale from his long imprisonment, but in his eyes, which gleamed out of his white face, there was no look of fear or hate. He was as willing to die as to linger on hopeless in the dungeon. The vision of the great Deliverer on which he had dwelt for so long seemed to fill his soul, his one longing was to serve him, and as that was impossible he had nothing else to live for.

When they left the prison the sky was blue and clear, but as they reached the foot of the green hill dark, threatening clouds hung over them. The two prisoners paused there, resting upon the ground the heavy crosses under which they had staggered, and then up the road from the city-gate another procession came toward them. There were priests in long robes, soldiers in red cloaks and shining armour, women—sobbing, many of them—and fishermen and peasants walking side by side with wealthy publicans and Pharisees.

In the midst of the crowd walked a white-

robed figure, and Tibeous caught his breath in astonished wonder. Could it be, yes it was, the King, the great Deliverer, who had drawn crowds to him upon the sunlit beach, and who by his great power had stilled the raging storm. And yet he was here to-day as a prisoner, his hands bound and his garments torn, while before him walked a man bearing the cross on which the Christ, like a common thief or murderer, was to be crucified.

"But he looks more like a King than ever," thought the bewildered Tibeous, and then he understood!

Around the Master pressed those who belonged to the kingdom of this world, their faces cruel, or evil, or merely weak, and among them the Lord whom they had bound walked as fearlessly and graciously as a young king on his way to be crowned. But others, the poor fishermen and many of the women, seem to have caught his look of perfect goodness. They were frightened and heartbroken as they gazed at their King who was so soon to be taken from them, but they belonged to him, to his kingdom which was not of this world, and

their faces, in spite of their sorrow, were full of childlike faith and trust.

Up the hill streamed the procession, Tibeous and his companion, with their guard of soldiers, walking slowly behind.

And then followed the deed at which through all the centuries that have passed since then men and women have shuddered with awestruck horror.

Jesus Christ, the Deliverer of the world, was nailed upon a cross, while upon two other crosses, one on his right and one on his left, hung the dying robbers. "With righteous wrath will he not denounce his murderers?" thought Tibeous, and then Jesus spoke: "Father, forgive them," he said, "for they know not what they do." And during the following hours of anguish he uttered no word of anger or condemnation. "How like a king he is even here," thought Tibeous. "Above the mocking, cruel crowd he hangs, unmoved by pain, glorious, noble, kingly to the end. Soon my life will be over and I shall never see that wonderful face again. Ah! if for one moment only I might feel that I have be-

longed to his kingdom. I, a miserable dying thief, who richly deserves this bitter agony."

Then as the crowd jeered at the Master, crying, "He saved others, let him save himself if he be Christ, the chosen one of God!", the other robber mocked him also.

"If thou be Christ save thyself and us!" he said.

But Jesus answered not a word, and Tibeous cried to the robber:

"Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss."

Then turning his pain-dimmed eyes toward Jesus he gazed with adoration and longing upon the face of the glorious dying Master.

"Jesus," he said, his voice trembling with wistful entreaty, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

And Jesus, gazing back at him with tender compassion, answered slowly:

"Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The terrible hours wore away and then—we

know no more, but can we not picture to ourselves a faint glimmer of the glory into which that very day Tibeous entered?

Jesus had said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." And it seems to me that when, in the twilight, the spirit of Tibeous entered the kingdom of heaven, all his wild and selfish life was forgotten, and he was like a little lad again at his mother's side. Surely his mother was waiting for him there, her arms outstretched with tender longing, and we know that he was with Jesus, the glorious King, the Light of Life, the Joy of the World.

And so to Tibeous, the dying thief, there came the glory of Easter.

THE LEGEND OF THE EASTER LILY

WHEN Jesus grew to be a man He went about teaching the people how to live. Many loved Jesus and believed what He told them. But some doubted His words, while others were unkind and even cruel. At last some wicked people believed it was unwise to let Jesus live and teach; and they hanged Him upon a cross. All His friends were very sad after they had seen Him die. They wrapped His body in linen clothes and laid Him in a tomb in a garden. A great rock was rolled in front of the tomb and soldiers were placed to guard the way day and night; for the wicked people who had killed Jesus did not wish any of His friends to take His body away.

All night and all the next day the soldiers watched at the tomb. The second night a strange and wonderful light came slowly in the east and some little birds began to sing beautiful songs. Suddenly, there was a great

noise and a shaking of the ground and a beautiful angel came down from heaven, rolled the stone away from the tomb and Jesus came forth! Two beautiful angels stood at the door to meet Him and with them He walked away through the garden.

When the friends of Jesus came to the tomb early in the morning they saw a wonderful sight. "Behold," said one, pointing to the garden near the tomb, "pure white lilies have come forth." "And behold!" said the other, "where pure white lilies mark the footsteps of Jesus and the angels."

SONG

HENRY NEVILLE MAUGHAN

There was a knight of Bethlehem;
Whose wealth was tears and sorrows:
His men-at-arms were little lambs,
His trumpeters were sparrows;
His castle was a wooden cross,
Whereon He hung so high;
His helmet was a crown of thorns
Whose crest did touch the sky.

IN THE GARDEN

AN EASTER PRELUDE

W. M. L. Jay

Part I

Deep down in the garden closes,
  In the wildering April weather,
The embryo lilies and roses
  Whispered and wondered together:—
"What doth it mean, this thrill
  And stir in the mould about us?
Will it prophecies sweet fulfil,
  Or cometh it but to flout us?"

A Lily

It may be a downward drift
  From that unknown world above us,
Some mystical stir or lift
  Of beings that know and love us,—
That world of wonderful things,
  Ineffable tints and glories,
And blossoms that wander on wings—

A Red Rose

Now, *do* you believe those stories!
That world and its wings and its glow,
I fear me are only fancies
Why, barely a fortnight ago,
Went thither our friends, the pansies!

A Lily

Did any return to tell
How the blindfold journey ended,—
If joy at the last befell,
Or a deadly frost descended?

A White Rose

Nathless, it is pleasant to stray
In limitless dream and vision.

A Red Rose

Nay, better be senseless as clay
And feel not the walls that imprison!

A Pink Rose

What more than this warm brown nest
Need any one dream or desire?

A Lily

Ah, me! in my aching breast
Is a thirst for something higher!
I may surely trust I go
To some lovely goal unknowing,
To some better thing I grow—
At least, I think I am growing.

PART II

Out in the garden closes,
  In the shining, summery weather,
Blossoming lilies and roses
  Wondered and laughed together:—
"What a wide, wide world of bliss,
  Of loveliest gleams and glowings!
We had never a vision like this,
  In the fairest of hope's foreshowings."

A White Rose

What a beautiful thing is light!
  What marvellous thing is motion!
  The sunbeams in followless flight,
The shimmer and swell of the ocean!

A Pink Rose

And the sky, what a wonder of blue!
And the dawn, what a dazzle of splendour!

A Red Rose

How light is the fall of the dew,
And the kiss of the breezes, how tender!

A Pink Rose

So blithe is the brown birds' song,
So clear is the ether they swim in!

A Lily

So kindly are men and so strong
So gentle and gracious are women!

A White Rose

Such gladness to bud and to bloom
Sweet odour and honey outgiving!—
How could we, down here in that gloom,
Conceive of this rapture of living?

A Lily

And yet, I was ever at strife
With a hope—that was half a sorrow;

So vain, in that underground life
Seemed thought of a radiant morrow!

Lilies and Roses

On lines that to us were unknown!
For written was all our story;
To the Lord of the garden alone
Be honour and praise and glory.
For had He not planted with care,
And loosened the earth from around us,
We never had grown to be fair,
Nor blossom nor blessing had crowned us!

"SPIRIT" AND "LIFE" *

MARGARET EMMA DITTO

TWO little souls were speeding their outward way from God. Angels folded their white wings in wondering silence, and watched the little ones go forth upon their unknown mission. The sky parted to let them pass, and "trailing clouds of glory" the two souls swept on into that unmeasured space where there is no light but the stars, and no sound but the voice of their harmonies. Then the two little souls spoke. "Who are you?"

"Who are you?" asked each of the other.

"I am Spirit," "I am Life," they made answer.

"It is all one," sang the little souls together. "We are the same. We came from God; we are going to dwell with men."

So they sang very happily as they sped

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along, and their voices were attuned to the music of the great spheres.

When the little souls reached the earth they said good-bye to each other, for each little soul had a house of his own. Not an immovable house made of wood and stone, but a tiny tabernacle that could be moved about. It was made of flesh and blood and skin and soft bones. It was the form of a little child.

"Oh, how nice!" cried each little soul, quickly speeding through the house from top to toe, and pulling the strings which set the breath to coming and going, and the little fingers and toes to quirking and nestling.

"I must take a peep out of the windows," cried each little soul, as he pulled up the curtains and looked out. "Oho! our baby has blue eyes like the violets," shouted the noisy children.

"Ah, the Prince looks upon us; his Royal Highness has eyes like his father the King," said the grand courtiers, speaking low, with deep reverence, for one of the little souls had found its home in a peasant's hut, the other in the palace of a great king.

The little souls never saw one another again until they had spent their time on earth and were flying back to God. Again they were speeding their way through the unmeasured spaces of the stars.

The souls knew each other, remembering the time when they had gone out from God to dwell among men. They gazed with joy at each other, for these returning souls were full of gracious loveliness, such as earthly eyes have not seen.

"Sweet Life, you are no longer a little soul," said Spirit; "you are strong and beautiful; you must have dwelt in a great house." "Ay," replied Life, serenely, "it was a perfect house, for the greatest of builders made it for me."

"Then it was spacious and lofty and beautiful, and it stood in a high and sunny space?"

"Oh no; it was none of these," replied Life. "It was narrow and infirm, and it trembled in the blast. No one who saw it desired it. But I loved it because it was the Gift of God, and I was so thankful. It stood in a deep valley, the shadows of the mountains made it dark, and I could not look far away. I

could not look down: there was only one way to look, and that was up, and my light came not from this side or that, but straight down from the Father of Lights, and so I was a shining one, though I lived in a dark place."

"What did you do in your house?"

"Always I toiled and served and suffered and loved, for some needed me who were poorer and weaker than I. Sometimes I was hungry and thirsty and in pain, but oftener I shared my loaf and cup, and helped the pain of others, and I kept the door ajar so that the poor and troubled ones, those who were cast down and ashamed, could come in without knocking and rest in a warm place; and they loved me—the poor, the weak, and the little ones. They are weeping now because my house is empty, and I shall look out of the windows no more: it is cold, the hearth fire can never glow again. But my house was weak and crumbling down upon me. I could stay no longer. So I came away and left it fallen, prone upon the ground—earth to earth."

"My house," said the Spirit, "was not like

that; it was noble and strong. It stood on high among the kings of the earth, and looked over my broad dominions. My house had towers of strength and halls of bounty and fair gardens with pleasant fruits. Every one who saw it desired it for its beauty and feared it for its strength. It could not be shaken in the rudest blasts, and the shock of war could not make it tremble or force its gates."

"What did you do in your house?"

"Always, like you, I toiled and served and suffered and loved, but not like you in the way of doing, for I was a king with sceptre and crown, and what I did was done in the royal manner. I could not share my cup and loaf with the hungry, nor lay my hand on the brow of pain as you did, but I could make laws and find out wisdom that would strengthen the land and bring bread and meat and health to my poor people. I could not take the suffering ones into my own house as you did, for they were many and my house was but one; but my house should stand a castle in their behalf—a stronghold and defence—and so standing it met its doom; in the prime of

its glory it reeled, turret and foundation, beneath the onslaught of the oppressor, and with a great fall it lay prone on the battle-ground, crumbling back to earth."

A herald went through the land crying, "The King is dead! the King is dead!"

"So is good Barbara," answered the peasants. "She was born the same night as the King, and she died the same day."

The two souls swept on through the wide spaces of the stars, on and on through the pearly gates of heaven. Angels folded their wings, and looked with tender awe upon these gracious beings who had come from the earth.

"We cannot tell who they are," said the angels.

"One was a King. One was a peasant. But one cannot tell which was the King and which was the peasant," said the angels: "these beings are alike wondrous fair and noble."

The two souls swept on, with equal stroke of their shining wings, through the serried

ranks of the heavenly host, and God did not welcome these home-coming souls as king or peasant, but He gave to each a new name—the new name which He has promised to him that overcometh.

A CHILD'S EASTER

ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

Had I been there when Christ, our Lord, lay sleeping
Within that tomb in Joseph's garden fair,
I would have watched all night beside my Saviour—
Had I been there.

Close to the hard, cold stone my soft cheek pressing,
I should have thought my head lay on His breast;
And dreaming that His dear arms were about me,
Have sunk to rest.

All through the long, dark night when others slumbered,
Close, close beside Him still I would have stayed,

And, knowing how He loved the little children,
Ne'er felt afraid.

"To-morrow," to my heart I would have whispered,
"I will rise early in the morning hours,
And wand'ring o'er the hillside I will gather
The fairest flowers;

"Tall, slender lilies (for my Saviour loved them,
And tender words about their beauty spake),
And golden buttercups, and glad-eyed daisies,
But just awake:

"'Grass of the field' in waving, feath'ry beauty,
He clothed it with that grace, so fair but brief,
Mosses all soft and green, and crimson berry,
With glossy leaf.

"While yet the dew is sparkling on the blossoms,
I'll gather them and lay them at His feet,

And make the blessèd place where He is sleeping
All fair and sweet.

"The birds will come, I know, and sing above Him,
The sparrows whom He cared for when awake,
And they will fill the air with joyous music
For His dear sake!"

And, thinking thus, the night would soon be passing,
Fast drawing near that first glad Easter light.
Ah, Lord, if I could but have seen Thee leaving
The grave's dark night!

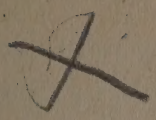
I would have kept so still, so still, and clasping
My hands together as I do in prayer,
I would have knelt, reverent, but oh, so happy
Had I been there.

Perhaps He would have bent one look upon me;

Perhaps in pity for that weary night,
He would have laid on my uplifted forehead
A touch so light;

And all the rest of life I should have felt it,
A sacred sign upon my brow imprest,
And ne'er forgot that precious, lonely vigil,
So richly blest.

Dear Lord, through death and night I was not
near Thee;
But in Thy risen glory can rejoice,
So, loud and glad in song this Easter morning,
Thou'lt hear my voice.



THE SPIRIT OF EASTER

HELEN KELLER

OH, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever. Sing unto Him a new song, for He causeth the desert to put forth blossoms, and the valleys He covereth with greenness. Out of the night He bringeth day, and out of death life everlasting. On this day a new light is upon the mountains; for life and the resurrection are proclaimed forever.

The bands of winter are broken in sunder, and the land is made soft with showers. Easter day bringeth the children of men near to the source of all light; for on this day the Lord declareth the permanence of His world, and maketh known the immortality of the soul. He hath revealed the life everlasting and His goodness endureth forever. Easter is the promise of the Lord that all the best and

noblest in man shall be renewed, even as growth and bloom and ripening shall not cease. The bars of winter are broken, and the iron bands of death are riven. The bird is on the wing and the flight of the soul shall know no weariness. The lilies lift their holy white grails brimmed with the sunshine of God's love. For, has not the Lord manifested His love in flowers and in the upspringing of green things? They are sweet interpreters of large certainties. Each year the winter cuts them down and each spring they put forth again. Each spring is a new page in the book of revelation, wherever we read that life is an eternal genesis, and its end is not; for it endureth forever.

THERE ARE NO DEAD

MAURICE MAETERLINCK
Adapted from "The Blue Bird"

"TYLTYL," said Light one morning, "I have received a note from the Fairy Berlyune telling me that the Bluebird is probably in the graveyard."

"What shall we do?" asked Tyltyl.

"It is very simple," answered Light. "The fairy gave strict orders. You and Mytyl are to go into the graveyard alone. At midnight you will turn the diamond, and the dead will come out of the ground."

Tyltyl did not feel pleased. "Aren't you coming with us?" he asked.

"No," said Light, "I shall stay at the gate of the graveyard. There is nothing to fear. I shall not be far away, and those who love me and whom I love always find me again."

Light had scarcely done speaking when everything changed. The shining Temple,

the glowing flowers, the splendid gardens vanished to make way for a little country graveyard lying in the soft moonlight. Tyltyl and Mytyl clung to one another.

"I am frightened," said Mytyl.

"I am never frightened," said Tyltyl, shaking with fear.

"Are the dead alive?" asked Mytyl.

"No," said Tyltyl, "they're not alive."

"Are we going to see them?"

"Of course; Light said so."

"Where are they?" asked Mytyl.

"Here, under the grass or under those big stones, Mytyl."

"Are those the stones of their houses?" asked Mytyl.

"Yes."

"When will you turn the diamond, Tyltyl?"

"Light said I was to wait until midnight."

"Isn't it midnight yet?"

Tyltyl looked at the church clock. "Listen, it is going to strike."

Above the children tne tones of the clock boomed out as it started to strike twelve.

"I want to go away, Tyltyl! I want to go away!"

"Not now, Mytyl; I am going to turn the diamond."

"No, no," cried Mytyl. "Don't! I'm so frightened, Brother! I want to go away."

Tyltyl tried vainly to lift his hand; he could not reach the diamond with Mytyl clinging to him.

"I am so frightened."

Poor Tyltyl was quite as frightened as she, but at each trial his courage had grown greater.

The eleventh stroke rang out. "The hour is passing. It is time," and, releasing himself from Mytyl's arms he turned the diamond.

A moment of suspense followed for the poor children, Mytyl hid her face in Tyltyl's breast.

"They're coming," she cried. "They're coming."

Tyltyl shut his eyes and leaned against a heavy stone beside him. The children remained in that position for a minute, hardly

daring to breathe. Then they heard birds singing, a warm scented breeze fanned their faces and on hands and neck they felt the soft heat of the balmy summer sun. Reassured, but finding it hard to believe in so great a miracle, they opened their eyes and looked about them. From all the open tombs were rising thousands of delicate flowers gradually growing more and more tall and plentiful and marvellous. Little by little they spread everywhere, over the paths, over the grass, transforming the rude little graveyard into a fairylike garden. Its sweet-scented breeze was murmuring in the young and tender leaves, the birds were singing and the bees humming gaily above glittering dew and opening flowers.

"I can't believe it! It's not possible!" cried Tyltyl.

The two children, holding each other by the hand, walked through what had been the graveyard, but where now no graveyard was to be seen. Vainly they searched among the flowers for a trace of the low mounds, stone slabs, and wooden crosses so lately there. In the presence of the truth they saw that all

their fears of the dead were foolish. They saw that there are no dead; but that life goes on always only under fresh form. The fading rose sheds its pollen only to give birth to other roses, and its scattered petals scent the air. The fruits come when the blossoms fall from the trees; when the grub dies the brilliant butterfly is born. Nothing perishes; there are only changes.

Beautiful birds circled about Tyltyl and Mytyl. There were no blue ones among them, but the two children were so happy over their discovery that they asked for nothing more.

Relieved and delighted they kept repeating: "There are no dead! There are no dead!"

LITTLE BOY BLUE

ALFRED NOYES

Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn,
Summon the day of deliverance in;
We are weary of bearing the burden of scorn,
As we yearn for the home that we never shall win;
For here there is weeping and sorrow and sin,
And the poor and the weak are a spoil for the strong!
Ah! when shall the song of the ransomed begin?
The world is grown weary with waiting so long.

Little Boy Blue, you are gallant and brave,
There was never a doubt in those clear bright eyes:
Come, challenge the grim dark Gates of the Grave
As the skylark sings to those infinite skies!
This world is a dream, say the old and the wise,

And its rainbows arise o'er the false and the true
But the mists of the morning are made of our sighs,—
Ah, shatter them, scatter them, Little Boy Blue!

Little Boy Blue, if the child-heart knows,
Sound but a note as a little one may,
And the thorns of the desert shall bloom with the rose,
And the Healer shall wipe all tears away;
Little Boy Blue, we are all astray,
The sheep's in the meadow, the cows in the corn,
Ah, set the world right, as a little one may;
Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn!

THE END

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